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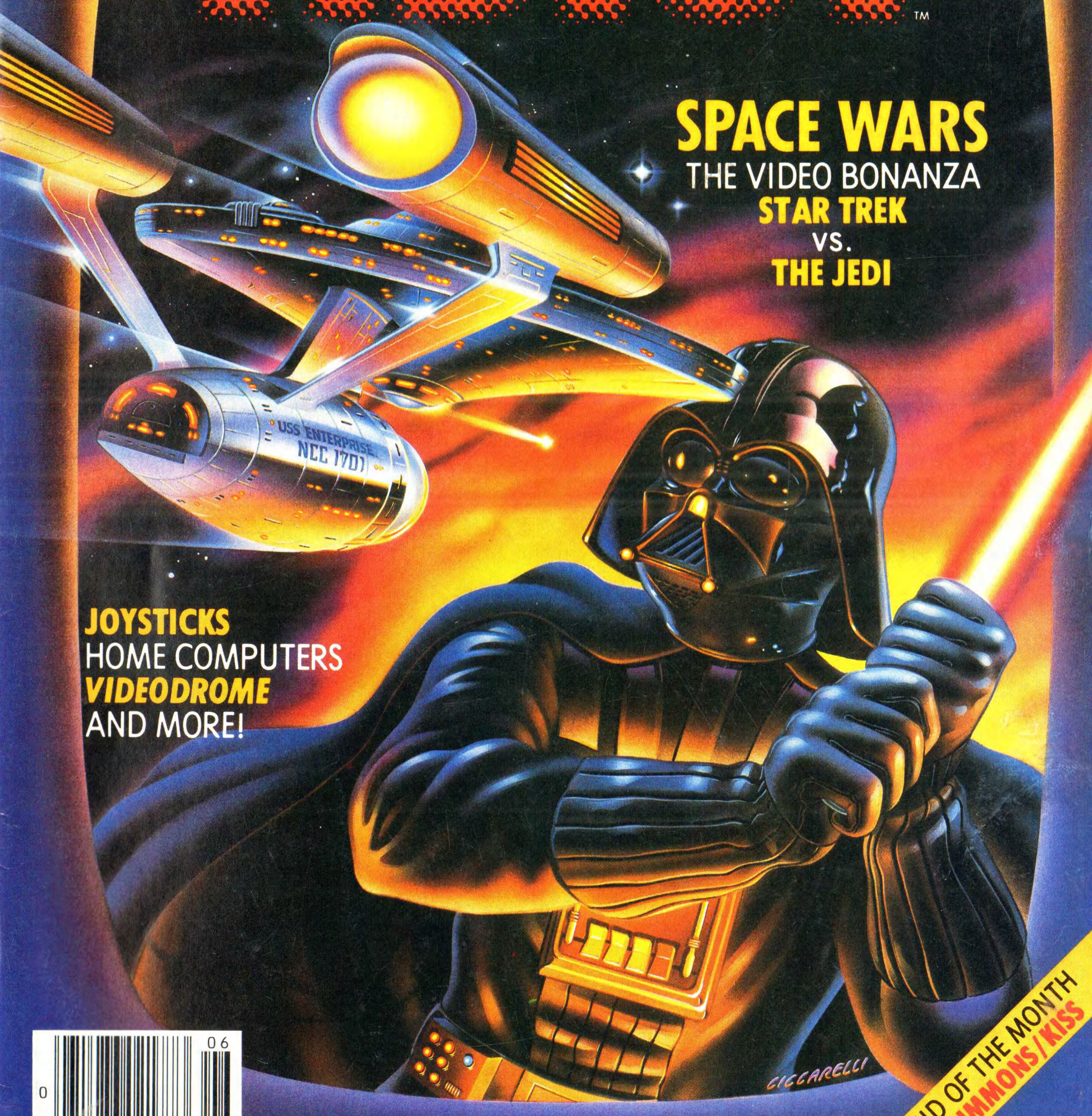
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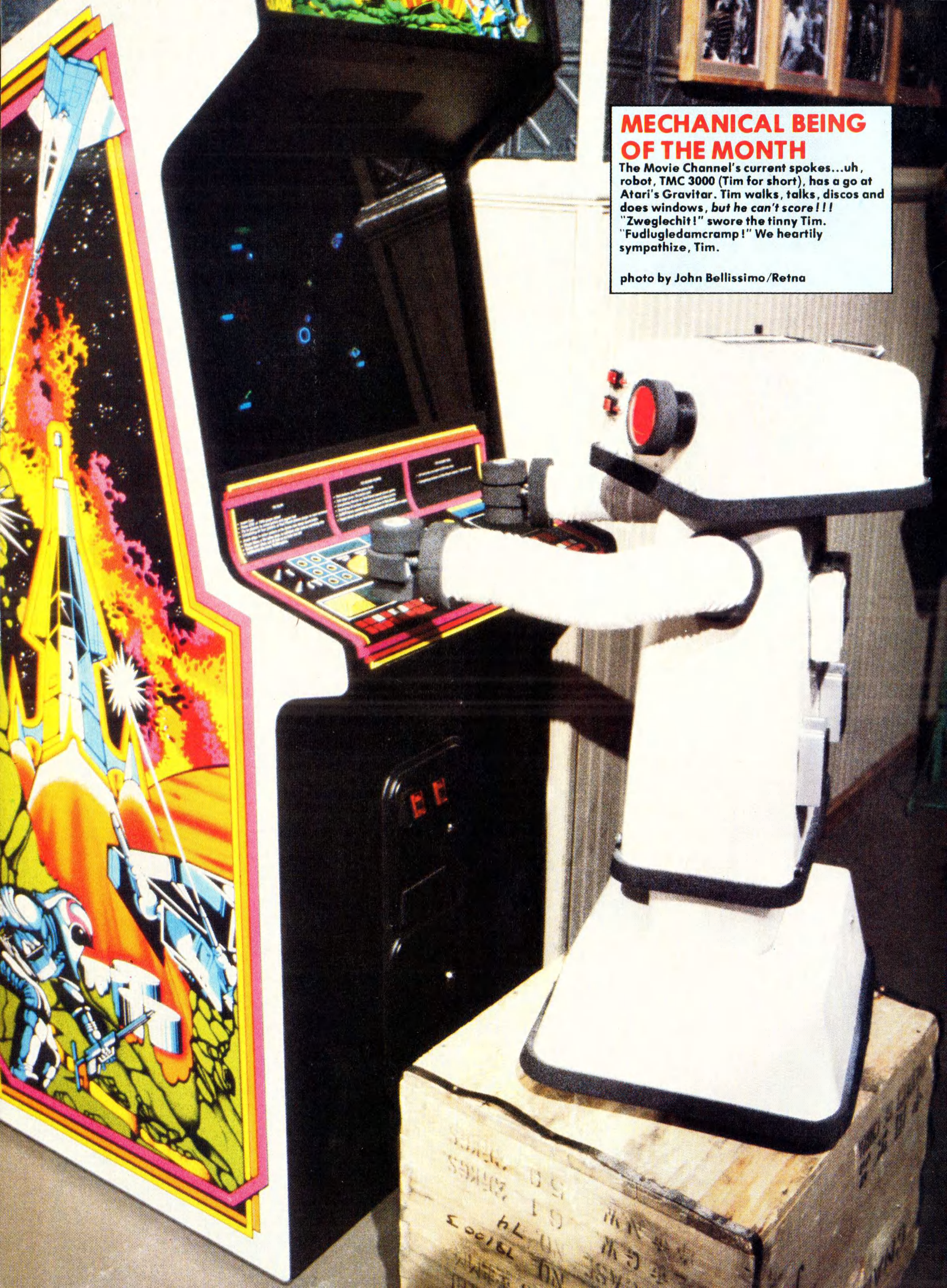

MECHANICAL BEING OF THE MONTH

The Movie Channel's current spokes...uh, robot, TMC 3000 (Tim for short), has a go at Atari's Gravitar. Tim walks, talks, discos and does windows, *but he can't score!!!* "Zweglechit!" swore the tinny Tim. "Fudlugledamcramp!" We heartily sympathize, Tim.

photo by John Bellissimo/Retna

VIDIOT™

VOL.1 NO.4
JUNE/JULY 1983

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VIDIOT™

Upfront

So you've picked up this VIDIOT and want to know about the new movie that features *both* Darth Vader and the Starship Enterprise?

You mean you don't already know?

It's called *The Jedi's Trek*, and rumors are already circulating that it'll by the biggest moneymaker the world has even seen. Co-produced by George Lucas and Gene Roddenberry, and directed by Steven Spielberg, it's been an extremely hushed-up blockbuster very few have been privy to. And it's due to open on Christmas Day, 1984.

The plan? Simple.

- Dual promotion by both Universal and 20th Century-Fox, who'll publicize the film both in the States and overseas.
- Simultaneous publication of William Kotzwinkle's *The Jedi Trek*, adapted from the screenplay, as a hardbound by Simon & Schuster ($20 for the first run, excluding 500 "special autographed editions" at $100 each) and a Bantam paperback, bearing a hefty $4.95 price tag.
- A two-hour PBS special, narrated by Carl Sagan and Richard Dreyfuss, titled "The Making Of *The Jedi's Trek*," to be aired on Easter Sunday, 1985.
- Special leasings to pay-TV services in March, 1986, at a minimum of $12.50 per household; one-time-only rights for HBO and Showtime, May, 1987, and NBC by Christmas, 1988.
- A Marvel comic adaptation.
- A deluxe, 3-D arcade game by SEGA in three configurations: cockpit, stand-up and cocktail table.
- A *The Jedi's Trek* videogame released by ColecoVision for their own systems, Parker Brothers for Atari VCS and Intellivision.
- An initial three-month rental period for the videocassette version of the film in both VHS and Beta formats beginning May, 1987, then available for purchase at the record low cost of $24.95 per cassette.
- Simultaneous release as RCA CED and MCA Laservision videodiscs.
- A soundtrack album on MCA Records.
- A three-volume boxed set on Columbia Records, narrated by William Shatner, featuring full dialogue and original music by John Williams and Quincy Jones.
- Over 150 merchandisings of the product name, overseen by Spielberg and Roddenberry, covering an array of products ranging from T-shirts and lunchboxes to a plush, $350 Spock "doll."

Staggering, isn't it? Most hushed-up of all, though—and don't tell anyone you read it here, please—is that over $450 billion will be generated by this project, all of which, incredibly, is to be split *three ways*. Lucas, Roddenberry and Spielberg will each receive a guaranteed *$150 billion* upon the film's completion by Labor Day of next year.

We at VIDIOT realize how unbelievable this story is, which is one of the reasons we just made it up in the first place. All we know is that there's a brand new *Star Trek* arcade game by SEGA, and a new Parker Brothers home game called Jedi Arena, and that we've reviewed both of them in this issue, and hey—wouldn't it all just *figure?*

Bet we scared you.

Dave DiMartino

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BUENO ENCHILADA!

As you see my name is René, but I'm not a girl, I'm a boy. Over here in Puerto Rico the name René is a name for boys. Please don't made the mistake on calling me Miss. Thanks for your attention.

René Matos
Puerto Rico

You bet, ma'am.—Ed.

SMURFETTE LUST!

Hi guys! I just picked up issue #2 of VIDIOT and at first I thought it was "too small for three bucks." This stupid "Rockets are VIDIOTS" and all that stuff. But of course, I got sucked into it and read your reviews including Smurf-Rescue in Gargy's Castle (since I have ColecoVision and the Atari adapter). Some of me thinks your mag is a rip compared to *Electronic Games* and *Electronic Fun*, but you have one twist no one has—humor. And that's why I'll keep buying your mag—just keep the laughs in it. Keep up the good work (?)

Jeff Winter
Edina, MN

NICKY POKEY

All my life I was bored. I sat around the house all day and watched Gumby. Then videogames came out. First it was Space Invaders. Then came Asteroids. Now Pac-Man. My life has been video ever since. I usually spend 20 bucks a week on the games, but I still don't think that's enough. The only reason I bought this magazine is because I read CREEM a lot and I wanted to check this out. So far I think it's pretty good. I like the articles you put in on a videogame every month. I think you should get a shot of Pat Benatar playing a videogame.

Kelly
Hammond, LA
P.S. Ozzy is great!

Gumby thinks so, too.—Ed.

BEATLE JUICE!

Hi! Just read Bill Holdship's Beatle article in VIDIOT and agree totally! I'm only writing for some information, if you could provide it. My Beatle video collection is quite extensive (including many things you've omitted), but you mention several things I haven't found yet. If you could let me know where you found them, I would appreciate it very much.

The missing items are:

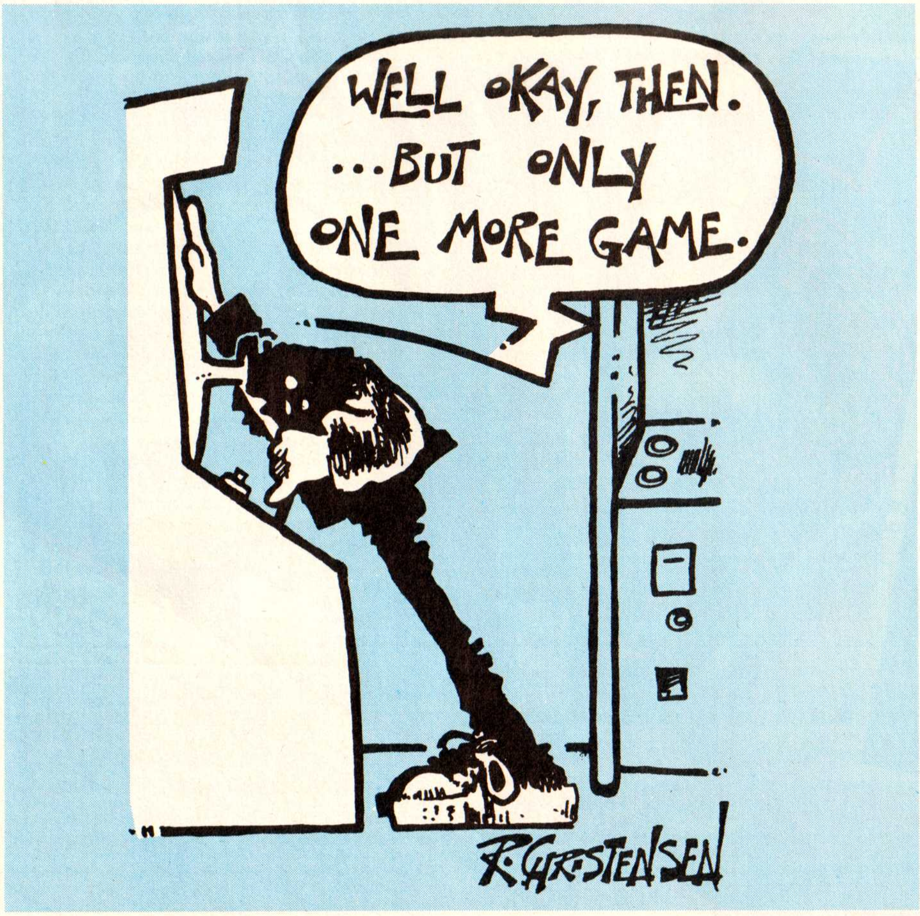
1.) "Well Well Well" and "It's So Hard" from *One To One*

2.) *Imagine* (all tracks except "Imagine" and "Gimme Some Truth")

3.) "Good Day Sunshine."

Thank You Very Mooch!
All I Need Is Tape,
Bob Wengle
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA

"Well Well Well" and "It's So Hard" were omitted from the '72 telecast of One To One, *but they were filmed and are available from enterprising bootleggers. The* Imagine *videos are from an "art" film by John & Yoko in '72, and "Good Day Sunshine" was a Fab Four promo video. We advise you write to various bootleg outlets, and ask them if they carry any or all of these. We know they exist 'cause we've seen them—Ed.*


WELL OKAY, THEN. ...BUT ONLY ONE MORE GAME.
R. CHRISTENSEN

DUST!

I just wanted to say "thanks" for your very fine Beatles poster. Finding such a neat item in my little brother's videogame magazine was quite a surprise. I guess you're not just a magazine for little kids now. Please print more stuff about things you can see on TV, OK?

Mary Beth Schmidbauer
Albany, NY

Next ish: famous antennas!—Ed.

NO MORE B & W!

Your Eye/Hand section in VIDIOT is really fine except for the pictures. Why do you have black and white photos of the actual game screens? The one thing I most want to see in a videogame review is a good shot of the screen itself. In fact, color throughout the publication would make it not look so "cheapo-cheapo."

Your reviewers are great, though. Bill Knight is real funny even when he isn't trying. Is he trying? But my favorite is Mark "Heinie" Norton. Why do you call him Heinie? Is it because of what I think it is?

Zaxxon Zeke
Kansas City, MO

No.—Ed.

CHOMP!

After reading the *Upfront* column in the April/May VIDIOT, I just had to write in and say, RIGHT ON! To say that certain competitors of yours are "generally stodgy and too often new product checklists" is an understatement. It seems like you guys really *do* give a damn, usually.

"Throw 'em on the floor," you say. I agree! The whole videogame field is overloaded with cushy relationships between manufacturers and editors. That might be a good story for you to cover.

Keep it up, guys. I know where you're coming from!

Laser Mechanic Jim
Ipava, IL

NO!

Some of your reviews are very funny! Are they supposed to be?

Nancy Senn
Medicine Hat, Canada

Several from your town have asked.—Ed.

NO ADS, DADS

Hey—you guys are getting better every issue! After that first one, I thought, *Nembo City*. But each time, the writing, content and especially the graphics have improved. You need more pages, though. When you pick up a little skinny VIDIOT and it says $2.95, you think *whoa!* I can get a bunch more pages at the same price from somebody else. Of course, many of your competitors use up half their issue with ads. Bet you're *jealous*, nyah nyah!

Mike Bick
Fullerton, CA

PLAY, TEX!

Those pictures you had to go with the Coleco article were something else! I could actually picture a big hairy magilla playing Donkey Kong and the stupid frog hopping on Frogette's back. But why the dish gloves for Pac-Man?

I bet you're gonna say *water spots*, just like on TV.

Cindy Saranville
Atlanta, GA

Frogette?—Ed.

IT'S THE BLIMP!

If most people wanted to see Captain Beefheart on MTV, he'd be on it. You guys sound like a bunch of old hippies. Who cares about the Beatles and Beefheart anyway? Wake up and face the '80s, guys—Duran Duran, Adam Ant, Missing Persons and a slew of people making new music for our time. Remember—video killed the radio star.

An MTV fanatic
Lansing, MI

You sound "fascinating."—Ed.

ROCK VIDKIDS

It figures that a magazine associated with CREEM would have something that most other video magazines sorely lack—excellent coverage of rock videos. The Beatles story and Captain Beefheart critique were great. Let's see more of the same.

Bob Gregory
Detroit, MI

D.K.J.?

Your magazine VIDIOT is Number One. It's colorful and it's state-of-the-art. I used to like the video magazine called *Electronic Games*, but since VIDIOT came, I like that better. I was stunned by the wonderful pictures, articles and hot features you had. I would like to ask you a question—do you think ColecoVision will come out with a home version of Donkey Kong Jr.? They did a nice job on Donkey Kong. I hope that will happen. Do you think so?

Sean Allen
Middlebush, NJ

It's already happened.—Ed.

EH?

Tonight my friend and I were sitting in my room playing Berzerk on my Atari. My friend had just bought the March 1983 edition of your mag. I had just passed my high score with one man left when he read me the article about the Pac-Man model that was made with *Canadians* in mind. "It only has one piece." Ha ha! I didn't find it very humorous. I was so mad, I rammed myself into the electric wall, totally derezzing myself. Then I ran downstairs and began to write this letter to your mag. My friend saw more of those bad comments. Now I was even more upset.

We understand that you are not going to print this letter in your magazine because you don't want to ruin your reputation. Well we got to go. Pizza's here. I hope you understand now, and in the future, we will still buy your mag. If there aren't any more bad jokes about Canadians or any other country for that matter.

Signed
Your Friends, The Canadians—the True Vidiots
Toronto, Ont

P.S. Even my grandma knows what a joystick is!

TOQUE AT WILL!

Hey! I know that VIDIOT is related to CREEM, but that serves no need to slur Canadians. Most of my relatives are Canadian, and even though I am a Tax-Paying American, I resent your comments all the way down to the tips of my roots. Naff off!

Kelly Green
Detroit, MI

PROBING QUERY

Why doesn't VIDIOT review porno films? They're supposedly one of the biggest items in the video market. Then you could feature Marilyn Chambers (pant, pant) as one of your "Vidiots Of The Month."

Dirty Dan
Pittsburgh, PA

LIFE IS GOOD

Your magazine may be the best video magazine I have ever read. Your writers

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are stupendous. The things they write about are exactly what we readers want to read about. You cover such a wide range of topics that my little brother Joey can read about the new home videogames, I can read about MTV videos, and mom and dad can read about the Beatles—even Wall Street "Videocy," as you so delightfully put it.

Only one problem, though. I don't have a little brother, and if I did his name wouldn't be Joey. My mom and dad have hated the Beatles ever since they first came out, and my dad hasn't made enough money in his life to even buy *steaks*, let alone stocks. I hate MTV and don't care what you people think about it either. Generally, I just think your magazine stinks on about every level. Other than that, though, things are fine.

Benjie Solomon
Hinckley, FL

JOIN THE CLUB

My name is Billy Dyer. My friend Chris Thompson has done your question quiz on page 19 of the Feb/Mar VIDIOT Magazine. Chris and I usually go to the arcade together and take about 10 dollars each to play videogames. The reason we stay so long is even though we might at least burn about a dollar, we pick up pointers from people who are experts at most video arcades. One time, however, a very nice man named Mike helped Chris and I out on Tron and we got to the tracks superfast. It seems to us that VIDIOT and our club coincide because our club is about video and rock 'n' roll. Well, I guess this is about all of my letter, so bye and have a nice Valentine's Day.

Billy D.
Spokane, WA

WATCH MORE MTV!

My letter has to do with your article "Forced To Watch MTV." For the first thing, Triumph's "Magic Power" happens to be my favorite video. As for Peter Gabriel, he has made a very childish video. Fleetwood Mac's "Hold Me" does not have much action on it, but the video fits the song very well, and is definitely not "a waste or boring." I agree with you about Eddie Money's "Shakin' " and "I Think I'm In Love," being bad videos, but Thomas Dolby's "Radio Silence" is worse. Crosby Stills and Nash's "Southern Cross" is a very beautiful video and doesn't deserve the remarks made about it. Johnny Van Zant is not dull or Barfus Maximus, and not all videos have to be imaginative. Adam Ant's "Goody Two Shoes" and Billy Joel's "Pressure" I do agree with you about (at least you did something right). If you would watch music television more often you would realize that there are better videos than the ones you have selected!

Concerned About Our Music
Clovis, NM

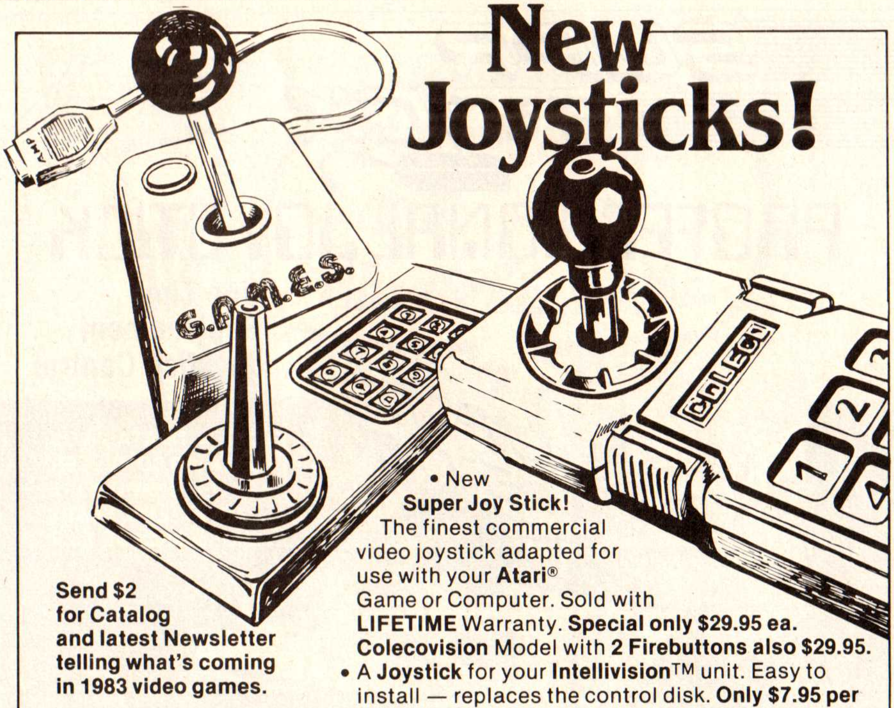
BACK TO SASKATOON

I am a very typical video game player. I own an Atari 400 computer system, including four games, Centipede, Pac-Mac, Star Raiders and Space Invaders. I also program a lot of computer literature. My computer occupies a lot of my time, but not enough to interfere with school and hockey. I like music, especially rock, but since I live in such a small town, there is no MTV. I only go to video arcades when I go to the city of Saskatoon, 50 miles away. My favorite arcade games are: Ms. Pac-Man, Centipede, Galaxian, Frogger, Turbo, and Pengo.

Finally, I bought this magazine because of many things: the flashy cover, and in-depth reporting of the video age. I also like the name of the magazine VIDIOT because it is a flashy, true name. One thing from the magazine that is definitely not true is about Canadians, because we, just like Americans, are greatly involved in the video age.

George Sherstobetoff
Blaine Lake,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan,
Canada ■

New Joysticks!



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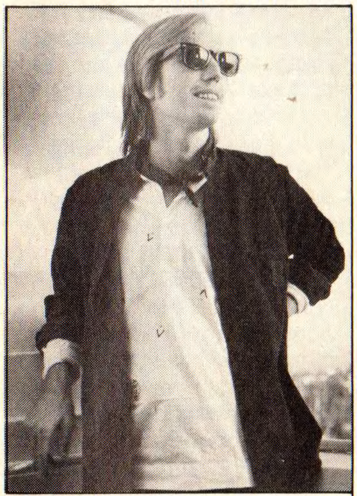


"A face like mine was made for *video*!!"

PETTY PUKES

ST. LOUIS—If you don't see much more of Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers on *MTV*, there's a reason.

"I hate videos," Petty said. "If I see one more, I'll puke.

"You can't tell who people are," the blond guitarist added. "Is this guy the bass player? An actor? A short-order cook? It's boring."

Petty, who's made videos of his own music, is giving up the medium. "Making them was the most boring thing," he said.

As an alternative, Petty and company will film a documentary about their career thus far. Cameron Crowe (*Fast Times At Ridgemont High*) will direct.

"I'LL HAVE AN APPLE PIZZA—HOLD THE OLIVES"

DALLAS—If you still think it's a big deal when the local Shakey's has a banjo player stroll through the salad bar corner, you're showing your age. In a dramatic move meant to add another dimension to their arcade rooms, ShowBiz Pizza Place has installed two Apple II computers in each of their 125 locations.

The computers are "the first to be brought in system-wide in the restaurant industry," said Tim Searson, a ShowBiz spokesman. "And they'll be made available for use by area schools during our off-hours."

ShowBiz hopes to blend recreation with education in the unique experiment. The terminals will offer 10 game programs, and the Apples will stress learning skills instead of motor skills.

"Visit From Space," "Minus Mission," "Find Your Number," "Tic Tac Toc," "Bumble Dots," "Butterfly Hunt," and "Find The Bumble" all encourage math and number recognition. Others use spelling and economics as game frameworks. Each computer "exercise" can be finished on one token within five minutes.

Harry Radford, ShowBiz director of operations, points out another benefit from the ShowBiz-Apple alliance. "Along with the enjoyment of playing will come a better understanding of computers," he said. "We think this will help young and old alike to overcome any reservations they've had in interfacing with computers."

Searson admitted that the addition should also help ShowBiz increase traffic—of patrons who want to interface with a cheese and peperoni deep crust pie.

MTV COMPETITION?

NEW YORK—*Night Flight*—the USA Network's successful weekend program of old movies, contemporary rock performances and taped interviews—has sired a spin-off that may compete with MTV.

Radio 1990 is set to debut in mid-March on the national cable system. The 30-minute series will air at 7 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday.

"It won't be just promo clips," USA's Marylou Brown told VIDIOT. "The show will have rock videos—say, the Top 20—but we'll have nightly updates on running stories, concert highlights, and news."

The format for *Radio 1990* will combine elements of MTV and *Entertainment Tonight*, but no host had been selected at press-time.

NO MORE FREE INSULTS

LOS ANGELES—Can you handle...*abuse*?

If not, don't buy Abuse, the new computer program that promises exactly what it says. You'll find your Atari or Apple comp firing nasty cracks at you, your ancestors and anything else nearby.

Ridiculous, trivial questions are another highlight of the program. Then, when the machine has *had its way* with you, it shuts you out completely and runs your deck all by itself, repeating progressively more vicious slurs all the while.

So, if you can't deal with *abuse*, *Abuse* or even *snide remarks about your blood type*, don't call up Don't Ask Inc. (213-397-8811).

Better yet, don't even *read* this item.

MONSTERS GETTING WORSE!

PITTSBURGH—Patty Martin and Mae Norris have had it with losing their kids to vid squids. So the two young mothers took their idea to the city.

The pair are on a campaign to prohibit Pittsburgh arcades from allowing school-age children to play video games during school hours.

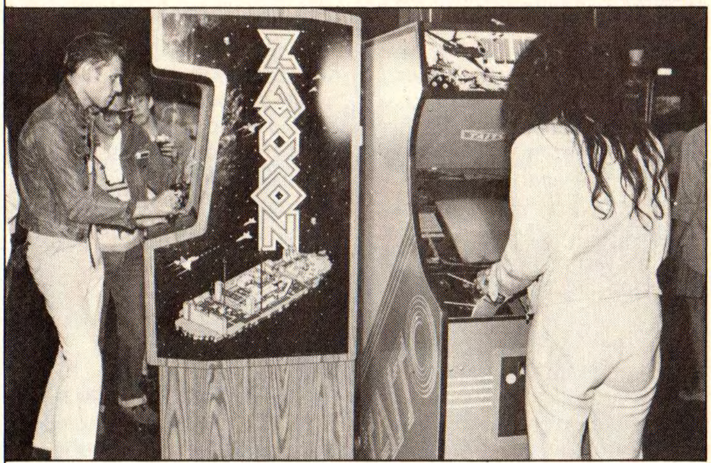
Glenn Barr

"These monsters skip school, and the problem's getting worse all the time," one calm supporter shrieked. "The more games they bring out, the more children will play them," the petition-wielding Norris added.

Local school district superintendent Bill Green shrugged off the connection. "It's a nationwide problem," he said.

District Justice Dennis Schatzman went along with the women, though. "These ladies are doing what has to be done," the judge commented. "(Video games) are popping up like wildfire around here."

Laura Levine



WHO *ARE* THESE GUYS?

Here you see Paul Simonon of the Clash disguised as Vic Morrow and Pearl E. Gates (ex-Explosion) doing her famous Rastafarian missionary impression. *Pretty convincing*—at least, we think so! But why are they visiting a video arcade incognito? Because their scores are so bad, they don't want to be recognized! Too bad this also applies to their music!

VIDIOT™ NEWS • VIDIOT™ NEWS

ELEPHANTS, DURAN DURAN LINKED!

NEW YORK—Just when you thought it was safe to leave *MTV* at home alone, Sony is bringing out a line of video "singles."

Timerider filmaker, recording artist, video pioneer and, yes, SAY IT, ex-Monkee Michael Nesmith will have two numbers from his Grammy Award-winning *Elephant Parts* re-released: "Cruisin'" and "Rio." Scottish singer-songwriter Jesse Rae—signed by Sony before any record label showed interest (CBS eventually inked him)—will be represented by "Rusha" and "D.E.S.I.R.E."

Sony's video singles will offer two to four tunes, up to 15 minutes in length. The mini-videos will retail for $19.00 (VHS) and $16.00 (Beta).

A hot item on Sony's first batch is an uncut version of Duran Duran's "Girls On Film," the controversial featurette banned on American cable, combined with their current hit "Hungry Like The Wolf."

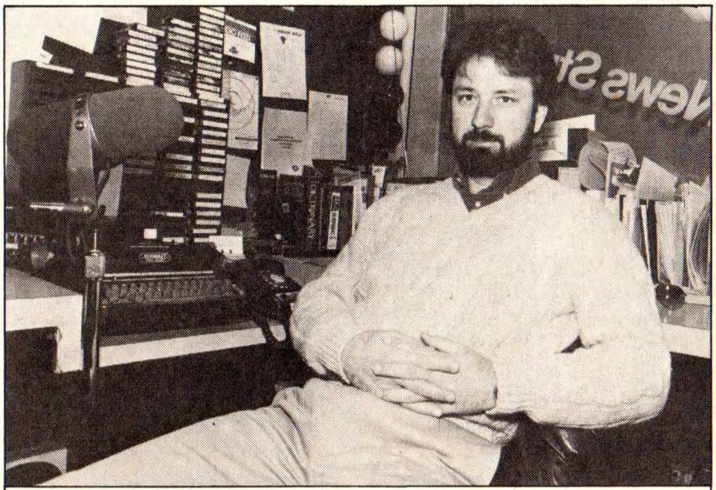
Other artists being mentioned as summer eyeball chow are Rod Stewart and Elton John.

LATE-NIGHT ROCK: RETURN OF THE UNDEAD

LOS ANGELES—Television's witching hour has always been a haunted house for the horrid. Wolfman Jack prowled the airwaves in *Midnight Special*; the zomboid Don Kirshner stalked through the shadows of *Rock Concert*. Only Dick Clark dares keep his Dorian Gray youth going for the afternoon *American Bandstand*.

Rising like a dbx vampire with a good agent, a new program—*Rock 'N' Roll Tonite*—will showcase "major artists" in a live setting taped at an L.A. location. The stars will also welcome guests with whom they will perform "personal favorites the public has never heard," according to a series spokeswoman.

Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve



"Hey-hey I'm Mike Nesmith, don't need to Tork around..."

Rock 'N' Roll Tonite will follow *SNL* in most major markets and will be simulcast with local cooperating stereo FM radio stations.

The mad scientists who conjured up this newest creation are no strangers to the media of video or rock 'n' roll. Blondie and Alice Cooper manager Shep Gordon drew up the plans, and his fellow executive producer is Bob Emmer, the veteran responsible for Blondie's popular video cassette *Eat To The Beat*. Emmer has also caused panic with his video work for Journey, Dwight Twilley and Foghat.

The other new-alien behind the scenes is Neal Marshall, who supervised the 1981 pay-TV presentation of the Rolling Stones.

The series has not yet announced a host, although Stephen King is available. Regardless of viewer preparation, late-night rock has escaped the confines of MTV and is alive and on the loose once more.

At least until the ratings threaten to drive a stake through its heart.

PAY TO PLAY? NO WAY!

CHAMPAIGN, IL—Remember all those dreams you had about getting paid to play videogames?

Some dreams come true. Student volunteers at the University of Illinois are getting between 50 and 80 dollars to learn how to play a modified version of Star Castle. Researchers at the University's Cognitive Psychophysiology Laboratory (and you though *ColecoVision* was hard to pronounce) are measuring the students' responses and reflexes in order to learn how the mind deals with complex tasks.

The researchers have also spawned the latest in video game chic. They hook the players up to a computer, by way of wires running from the player's head to an EEG machine. They then record the player's brainwaves, if any.

The spaghetti-heads play for 12 hours (after which their brainwaves are probably as straight as laser fire) and get cash bonuses for good scores.

Guess who's coming up with the cash for this project? The organization that nothing can stop, not even a jammed joystick: the U.S. Air Force.

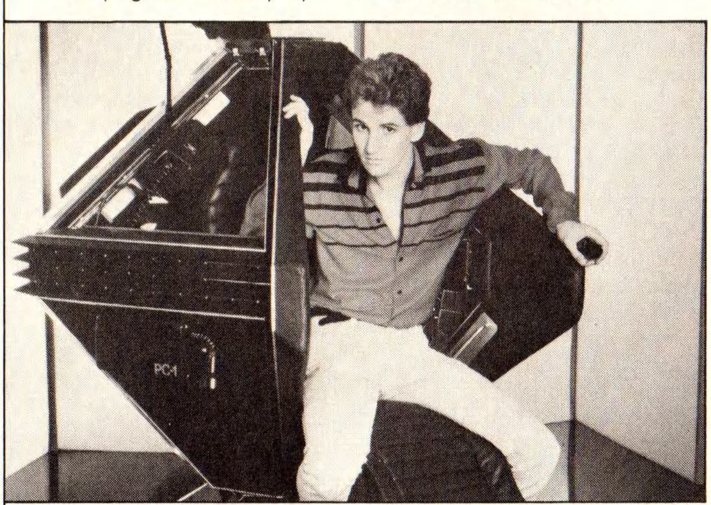
WE HAVE COME FOR YOUR EXECUTIVES

NEW YORK—Atari's boardrooms are aquiver with a new executive tactic. Taking a lesson from the Hearst-Pulitzer newspaper circulation wars of the early 1900s, the video game giant is raiding its competitors to staff its own front offices.

The latest acquisition is Marcian Hoff, Jr., inventor of the micro-processor—the fingernail-size silicon chip that enables most electronic devices to be quick, effective and cost-efficient. Hoff was a prominent researcher at Intel Corp.

Hoff will team up with former Xerox wizard Alan Kay, who joined the Atari team in 1981, in research and development.

In late 1982, Atari lured two top men at Polaroid, management chief Peter C. Wensberg and marketing head Ted Voss, into the fold.



POD FEAR SWEEPS AIRWAVES!

In the future, outer space aliens will disguise themselves as *Dance Fever* contestants. They will land their futuristic spaceships near one of the three remaining discos in America. There, they will desaucer and blend in with the dancers. No one will suspect. This process has already begun...

HOTLINE FOR SOAP OPERAS

CHICAGO—For Midwest fans of daytime dramas, a new service could bring relief for nagging questions about missed episodes.

T.V. Soaps, which made its debut in mid-February, brings answers to bewildered soap dopes. A telephone information service providing daily updates of twelve top soap operas, the free service is obtained by simply dialing S-O-A-P-S-S-S (762-7777) in Chicago. After an operator is told which program the caller would like to be briefed on (and following a 10-second commercial) a taped one-minute summary takes over.

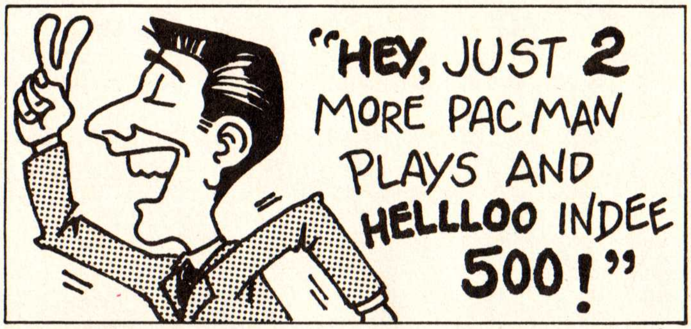
Mark Guncheon created the service after hearing of a similar subscription service in California.

"People subscribed for three months at a time and had to wait until the next day to hear the summary," Guncheon told VIDIOT. *T.V. Soaps* will record fresh updates within 30 minutes of air-time.

Will anyone phone in?

"We expect five or six thousand calls a *day*," Guncheon replied. "After all, Nielsen says that 400,000 viewers watch soaps in Chicago alone.

"It's surprising the number of people who take a lunch to see *All My Children* or buy a VCR just to record *The Edge Of Night*," he added. "I'm optimistic. I know it's going to work."


"HEY, JUST 2 MORE PAC MAN PLAYS AND HELLLOO INDEE 500!"

Glenn Barr

JURY STILL WAY OUT

STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA—Tedium loves company, but comfy private arcades love cozy quarters. San Joaquin County officials have begun testing coin-operated video games like Pac-Man and Galaxian in juror rooms. And the courthouse may never be the same.

The machines won't be used for sequestered juries contemplating a trial, however, instead being limited to prospective jurors awaiting their assignments.

The county hopes to realize enough revenue from the venture to re-furnish the room and produce a short slide show about jury duty.

The 90-day test will run through Memorial Day, when county officials could take a field trip to the Indy 500.

CHIPS OVER TOKYO

WASHINGTON—Just when *The Winds Of War* blew over, some American industrialists started to rattle their economic sabers as if Pearl Harbor, the *Maine* and the Alamo fell last week.

First it was the automibile industry, hungry from a dwindling domestic market more attuned to mileage and cost than chrome and luxury. Then it was major manufacturing industries like steel finding themselves limping badly after losing the competitive edge to foreign suppliers. Now, the computer business is up in arms about rising competition from abroad.

The five leading semiconductor firms in the U.S. lost $86 million in sales to Japanese companies last year, according to a report issued last month. And that figure reflects only two types of microchips.

Since labor costs are basically identical, industry experts blame Japan's "head-start" from its "more cooperative" government.

Japan's government restricts imports of high-technology products, grants, loans and tax breaks to their computer firms, and sometimes underwrites market expansion schemes.

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldridge met with U.S. computer representatvies to plan an economic strategy to salvage the bruised industry.

A Commerce Department spokeswoman refused to confirm that the U.S. is considering tariffs on Japanese chips and stepping up trade in U.S. high-tech products like Silicon Valley software, adult cable programs and *Mr Moto* movies.

THE FAME NAME GAME

LAS VEGAS—If New York is the city that never sleeps, the winter Consumer Electronics Show here showed that Las Vegas is the city that never stops. Amid manufacturers' booths, presentations and new product line showcases, one almost expected Jim McKay's *Wide World of Video Sports* or Brent Musberger's 16-wheel media wagon to relay the game news to videogame fans across the Great Wasteland.

Although no real bombshells were dropped, one trend was obvious: "pre-sold" titles. A representative list of familiar titles to be released the next few months includes M*A*S*H and Paul McCartney's Give My Regards To Broad Street (20th Century Fox), Mickey Mouse Goes Exploring (Disney), Frankenstein (Data Age), Dracula (Mattel), Popeye and the Incredible Hulk (both Parker Brothers), Snoopy (Atari), Keystone Kops Kapers and Three Little Pigs (both Activision).

Also increasing was the consideration of the under-12 market, with game carts like Plaque Attack, Kids' Library and Strawberry Shortcake pointing toward the younger target group.

"This isn't necessarily the way to go," explained one Atari spokeswoman at CES. "After all, E.T. didn't do nearly as well as everyone assumed it would. What consumers enjoy about a TV show or movie or character doesn't always translate into a good video game."

Oops. Does that mean we won't be seeing the game of R-rated Porky's or maybe an instructional cart called This Old House?

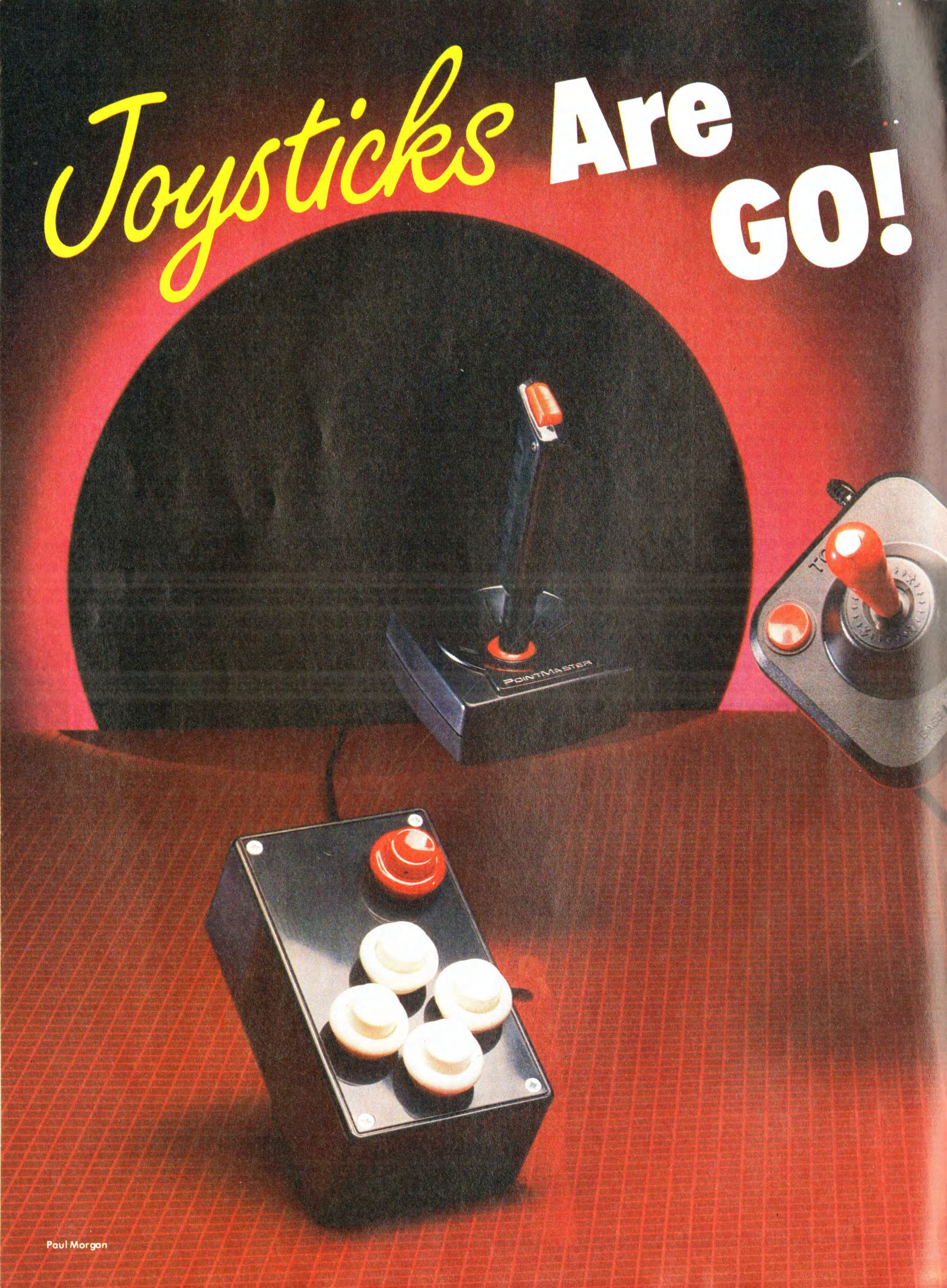
Larry Kaplan

SUPER PAC-MAN
Bally MIDWAY

LIMP FINGERS DON'T APPLY

"For proper warm up, we don't suggest Ben-Gay," advises Hank Heiser of Bally/Midway. "Just firmly grasp the hand of the player next to you, and squeeze vigorously for 30 seconds." Yeah, but Hank, haven't you considered the possible *danger* in this? "Not if you have dry palms!" Hank chuckled. Tell *that* to Chuck E.

Joysticks Are GO!


POINTMASTER

Paul Morgan

BY RICK JOHNSON

Do you remember your first joystick? OK, so maybe it wasn't an experience up there with your first kiss or first taste of new smoker's mayonnaise. Think hard—are you sure you can't recall that cuddly, primitive plastic carrot that stuck its little nose-stick out of your very first, freshly-ripped-to-shreds game box in the glory days since the Great Paddle Disavowal?

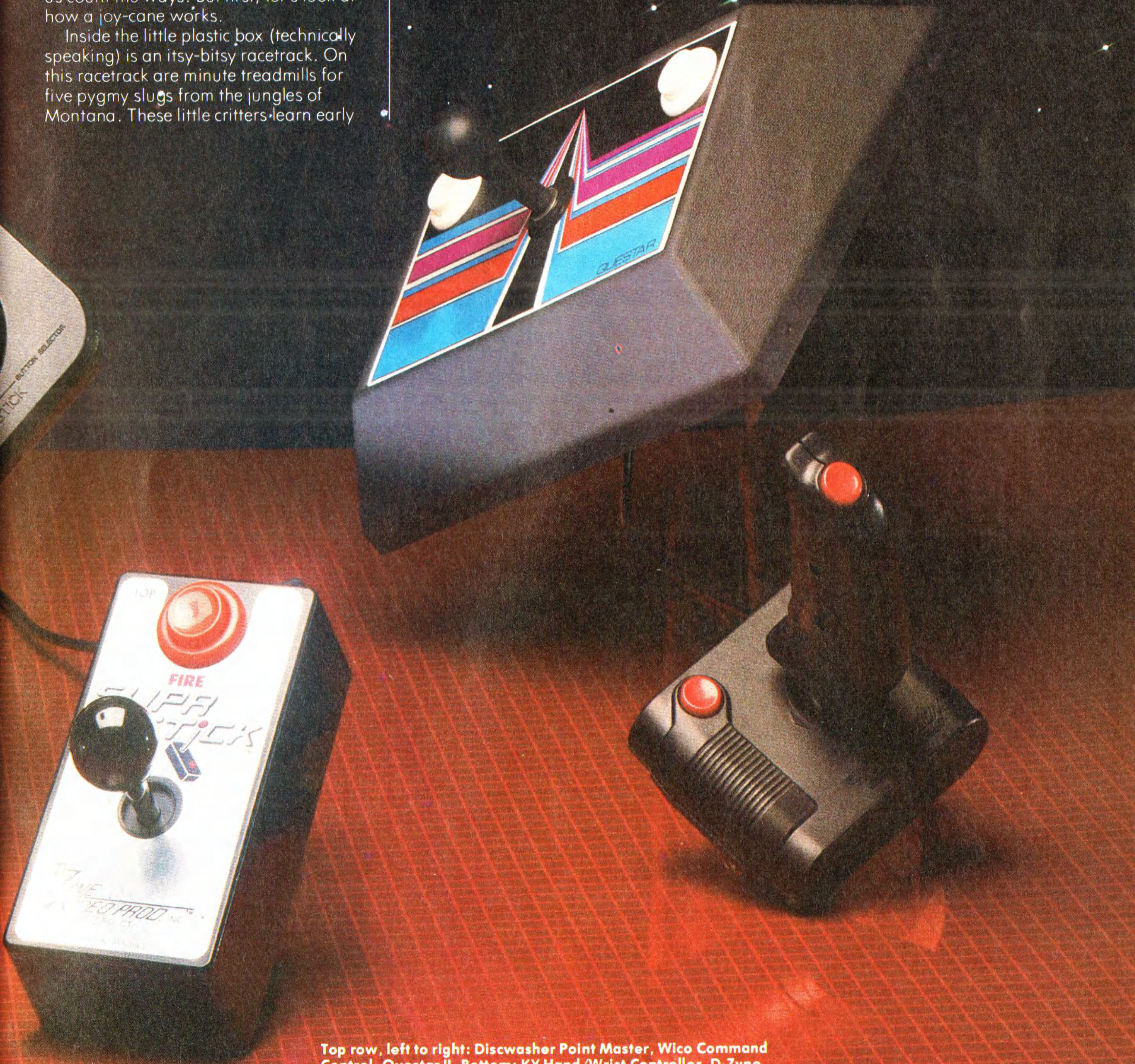
Well, if you remember it, forget it! Those days are over! Gone! Never happened! Science has arrived on planet joystick. Technology even!

How do you improve the joystick? Let us count the ways. But first, let's look at how a joy-cane works.

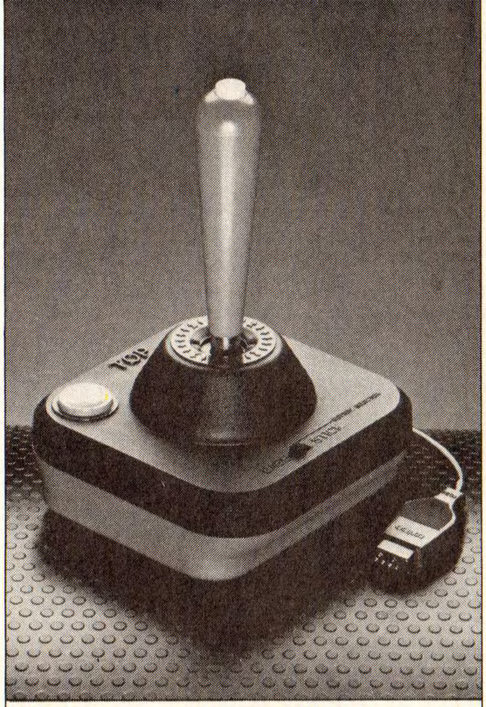
Inside the little plastic box (technically speaking) is an itsy-bitsy racetrack. On this racetrack are minute treadmills for five pygmy slugs from the jungles of Montana. These little critters learn early on that, if they don't crawl fast enough, there'll be no slug chow in the tiny dishes tonight.

Worse yet, at the point where the stick connects to the inside of the case, nasty-looking slug prods dangle precariously close to the track. When you move the stick, these prods are filled with electricity, encouraging the petite moles to *move it* or else.

Enough of this hi-tech blah-de-blah. To give all our trial sticks a good



Top row, left to right: Discwasher Point Master, Wico Command Control, Questar II. Bottom: KY Hand/Wrist Controller, D-Zyne Super Stick, Spectravision Quick Shot.



The fire button on the end of Wico's Command Control makes for great shooting in Missile Command.

workout, we put each of them through a grueling, exceedingly amateurish session on four different games. We tried all types of contests: maze games, climbing games, shoot 'em up games, shoot 'em down games, crawling games, square dancing games, falling-right-over games and, of course, wiggling games. The main tests were conducted on the following carts:

Alien—This is a maze contest that, let us say, *borrows significantly* from Pac-Man. Instead of eating dots, you're stomping on nasty alien eggs, an activity you never get a chance to do enough of in regular, boring life itself. Alien also has the same sort of problems as the Atari VCS Pac-Man does. Corners can be difficult to negotiate and sudden changes in direction sometimes cause a frustration level near the point where, *what the heck*, you might just as well be the side of a barn. As an added feature, Alien has a bonus round that consists mainly of traveling a straight line fast. Way over my head.

Beany Bopper—Here's a real measure of a joy-rod's ability to make 90-degree turns. You, the skewer-wielder, have a Bopper with which to bop—you guessed it, *Beanies!* The mean bean machines bounce around the screen randomly and you have to play 'em off the edges at ever-increasing speeds. The fatigue factor quickly reaches a level where your paws feel like the disembodied hands in TV commercials that reach out of walls and mirrors to steal personal hygiene products.

Missile Command—Just in case you've awakened to a fuzzy world (as the contact lens blurb goes) and don't remember this cart, the player sits in a downscale missile base, trying to protect six cities that—on the VCS at least—look a lot like cute little outhouses. Line up your cursor and blam, blam, blam.

Fast Eddie—Here's a climbing and jumping game that's a *lot* easier to deal with than that big ape and his offspring of questionable legitimacy. You'd almost think it was strictly for kids (or editors) at first. It gets considerably tougher in the later going and makes rather adorable noises to boot, including the now-classic *"blort!"*

Needless to say, we tested all the "gourmet" joysticks we could get our mitts on. We used the Atari VCS exclusively because *that's what they're for*. Now, is that scientific or what? There *are* attachable/replaceable joy-cudgels for Intellivision and ColecoVision (whose own joystick is just dandy with the VCS by the "way"), which we'll take up at a later date, like next monsoon.

We were very much surprised to find that *all* the joysticks tested worked as well as they turned out to. You'll never know what *total dillweeds* the regular Atari sticks are until you try some new ones. As with the famous Knit Wit Kit, "you're an expert in minutes!" Or you feel like it anyhow.

Our big finding? The usefulness of the stick depends on the game you're playing, We're not copping out (much). It's just plain true!

Still, six of the joy-prongs stood out from the massive heap we tried. They were so good, in fact, they brought us out of the videogame doldrums that had set in since the coming of a new VCR. It was so much fun recording and erasing Patricia Neal ads that we'd forgotten the fun of reaction abuse. But hey—whipping our sentimental fave, Missile Command, game after game was almost as exciting as sneaking up on bait!

So listen up, despoiled carhops, even if you're the kind of person who won't believe anything unless it counts in horseshoes, take a serious peek at these heavy duty joystick road tests. It won't decide anything as monumental as the Viva paper tissue/paper sponge debate, no way. But until machines take over everything but the actual act of yawning, these fax 'n' figures might just come in handy.

So here are the Big Six, in descending order of excellence. Please remember that these are the cream of the crop, the six sticks that killed the most alien bad guys the funnest. *Technologically* speaking.

1) KRAFT ATARI-COMPATIBLE: When you hear "Kraft," what's the first thing you think of? *Cheese*, of course, and annoying recipe supplements in *TV Guide* that invariably mess up the Monday prime-time listings, right? Wrong Kraft. *This* Kraft has been making control sticks for medical, scientific and other purposes for a couple decades now.

Their new, "generic" joy-cane tested superbly. It did, in fact, revolutionize our own approach to Missile Command. You can really rip your cursor across the "sky" in an exact straight line, making the blanket-blammo method of city protection effective with relative ease and quickness. Also, the flatness and location of the fire button makes for EZ defense. With this maneuverability, you'll feel as though you possess glandular intuition when you tackle those deadly 90-degree turns in Beany Bopper with ease and climb up a storm on Fast Eddie. The fatigue factor hardly even appears, regardless of the condition of your grasp 'n' whip muscles.

The only drawback worth mentioning is the shortness of the stick itself. This causes some problems cornering and reversing field in Alien and slightly inhibits response on ladder-turns in Fast Ed.

Still, this joy-pole is the finest development since the Weather Channel's fascinating *Aunt Jemima Presents The Wind Chill Chart* show.

2) QUESTAR II: This fine console is the

Ain't *Nobody* Can't Play!

Another fab development in the joystick biz is customized controllers for the disabled. If you think you, the insensitive clod, get bored, imagine being stuck in a wheelchair, bed or whatever all day long *every* day. Indefinite, forced viewing of *Family Affair* reruns is not good for the morale, not to mention the brain.

A California manufacturer called KY Enterprises (3039 E. 2nd St., Long Beach 90803) has developed several different "joystick" controllers for many kinds of disabilities: hand/wrist, mouth-operated, head switch, portable self-contained game units and even a multi-game board that allows remote selection of cartridges.

The only one we were able to try was the hand/wrist number, which has five soft-touch buttons, one for each direction plus a fire button. When they say soft-touch, they *mean* it. Just *looking* at this unit is almost enough to click the switches.

Actually, some of these items sound real attractive to the non-handicapped as well, particularly the portable job and the multi-game board. Hey, KY guys—send us those last two *pronto*, and start working on a *typewriter for the stoopid!*

SUPR STICK
PROFESSIONAL JOYSTICK
D-ZYNE VIDEO PROD. INC.
SUPR STICK
TOP

The best feature of D-Zyne's Supr Stick is it's ball-grip.

single biggest scholarly advance since the discovery that, if you lay a year's worth of Wendy's french fries containers end to end, they'd stretch from San Francisco to New York 109 times over!

The heft resulting from the placement of the stick on a base this size makes for phenomenal back and forth movement in Missile Command and Alien, including the cornerning that can be as tough as climbing soap in the latter. Ditto the speedy maneuvers required to bop those damn beanies in you-know-what.

One hitch—the fire button's location is such that you'll need two very quick hands for some games. This proved to be a slight problem in Fast Eddie, where the ability to jump is as important as keeping a fresh glasscutter in your car trunk. No problems in Missile Command, though, where the fire button/joy wand coordination is less potentially confusing.

3) WICO COMMAND CONTROL: In Beany Bopper, there's a stage we refer to as the Bouncing Orange Eye test. If you've nailed *x* amount of Beanies, these big computer-nerf eyeballs start bouncing out from everywhere even crazier than a bad day at the USAF Bird Impact Range. The BOE round is also an excellent measure of fatigue, as you must shoot-to-stun the whizzers to slow 'em down. Wico cleaned up here as well.

With a fire button located on the end of the stick itself, you can perform the squeeze 'n' spray action of Missile Command so fast you can't even hear the blasts, much less *see* them. The tall joy-stake makes for good turning ability on Fast Eddie and Alien—quick, clean, all that good stuff. Only slow spot was encountered during Alien, where the box fire button kept getting in the way.

4) DISCWASHER POINT MASTER: Here's one to nearly eliminate the aforementioned fagged-out factor in Bopper of Beanies. The featherweight base is hollowed out in the center, giving the player a grip as tight as that of a disgusted podiatric narc busting Mick Jagger for his sissy sneakers. This lightness can work against you, however, in Missile Command, when you zoom left and right getting even with those damn missile spitters. Hey, c'mon—don't you remember the old Klingon proverb? Which one? This one: *"Revenge is a dish that's best served cold."*

The Point Master negotiated the mess that is Alien very well, scrambling dem eggs like an anti-protein operative from Hostess. The corners were a bit harder because of lack of heft, but not quite what you'd call a problem. Ditto Fast Eddie, where those sudden jumps from "floor" to ladder can be most difficult.

5) D-ZYNE SUPR STICK: This baby's hotter than a cot full of blazing oxygen candles on certain carts. On others... well, *times like this are made for Taster's Choice*. Being comparatively heavy, the heft really assists you, the hopper, in Fast Eddie and you, the corner dodger, in Alien.

The Supr Stick's slight delay in response, however, can be a real headache in matches like Boppo Beano and Missile Commies. Further, the fire button is too hard to press down continuously for successful rapid fire, which means rubble city when those missiles start falling.

6) SPECTRAVISION QUICK SHOT: Here we have a slightly different customer, with a porky joy bludgeon that will be ideal for some hands and cement mittens for others.

One particularly good feature not available on the other sticks is the off-center placement of the fire button on the box. It's not so far over as to tire or confuse, but in a spot just right for shooting projectiles out of the air in Miss Command or blasting ghosts...uh, *monsters* in Alien. Fast Eddie himself says, "don't try this one on *me*, 'cause you'll *eat rung* if ya do!" As for Beany Bopper, better you should invest in a good hotdog.

Still, this one makes our Big Six despite minor flaws because, in response and accuracy, it's *way* better than a regular ol' Atari stick. ■

Intellivision *Improved!*

Like many a gamester, we've had our share of trouble with Intellivision's disc controllers. Even after getting the hang of it, fatigue becomes a problem early on.

Some smart manufacturers have finally come to the rescue of Intell-paw sufferers. Each has a product that replaces the disc with a small-but-lively joystick.

Here's a quick peek at these handy contraptions:

SKIL-STIK—This one is the easiest to install. Simply peel off the double-sided tape on the bottom of the stick and apply it to the disc. Action is instantly improved and fatigue takes a nap. Only possible drawback—it's hard to *remove*, if and when. (*Available from C & T Creations, 127 Weybosset St., Providence, RI 02903*)

DISTICK—To lay this one in place, all you have to do is unscrew the bottom of the controller, insert stick and put it back together again. Sounds scary, but it's absolutely *no sweat*. Listen, if *we* can do it, so can you. Again, movement is drastically improved and your wrist won't feel like something on the menu at a Chinese restaurant. (*From G.A.M.E.S., 6626 Valjean Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406*)

ALUMINUM JOYSTICK SET—Again, this addition requires some screwdriver twiddling to install. Well worth it, however. This stick has a metal ball on the grab-end that really makes it go. It radicalized our Demon Attack game, which really needed *something*. (*Also from G.A.M.E.S.*)

All of the above joystick attachments greatly improve wham-dexterity. Now all that Intell needs is a fire button you don't have to fracture your wrist to shoot with.

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

BY RICHARD ROBINSON

NEW RECORDS FOR THE SAME OLD SONG

I'm not one to argue against the future. But I am inclined to complain when the future comes too soon. Or when it doesn't work as well as the present. "Progress" has been a cult in this country for so long that what follows may not make any sense to you. And it will certainly annoy anyone who's been brought up with the idea that progress and improvement are synonymous.

The cult of progress is important, or at least it *seems* important to our economy. Doubleknit polyester is better than wool, tripleknit poly doesn't wrinkle like cotton, radio isn't as good as television, and who needs to read when they can look at pictures. And if glistening crystals of refined sugar are added to soup and bread then they'll taste better than they used to.

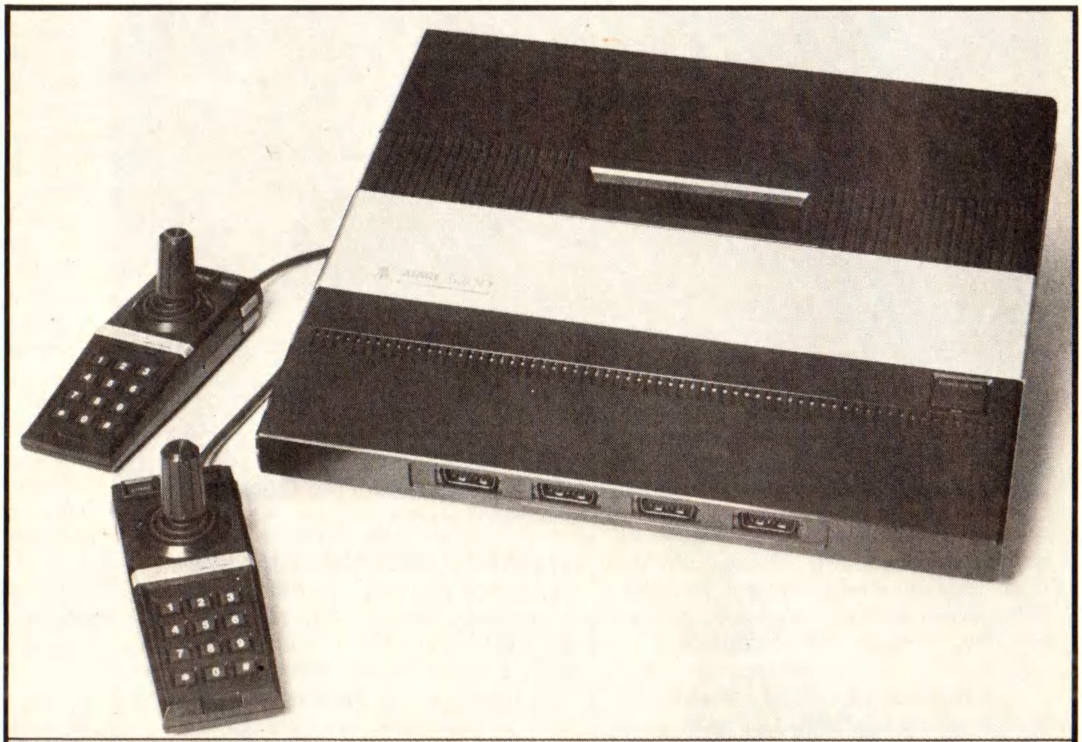
Once upon a time we could have cut out progress and cured cancer. But it's too late for that now. We must progress past what progress has done to us, pay off the balance on our charge cards, and get far enough forward so that we may have some chance of getting back to a more stable, less disposable, environment. Fat chance.

About a hundred years ago, there was no known method to record sound and then reproduce it. Then Edison came up with his wax cylinders, recorded sound, and then played it back. Edison sold more cylinders than you might imagine—not until Elvis and the Beatles were his sales figures challenged. But someone came up with an improvement on his cylinders: the 78 rpm record. Then someone else progressed to the 45 rpm record. And then the 33⅓ rpm record. Then sound recorded on magnetic tape. Then two synchronous tracks of parts of the same sound to produce stereo images. And no one worried too much that 78 was a better speed than 33⅓ when it came to fidelity. Progress. And consumer action.

Now progress is upon us again. Because record sales are down, the progress to the do-it-yourself audio cassette and Sony Walkman turned out to be a dangerous step—it put progress in the hands of the *buyer*, not the seller. To get back control, the Japanese and the American record companies want to make 33⅓ as much an anachronism of the 1980s as the 78 was of the 1950s. In the name of progress, of course.

The idea is that the 33⅓ rpm record isn't perfect. (How could it be with the lack of quality control involved in record production?) So to make it perfect, it must be destroyed. Replaced.

Funny: the 33⅓ record was *fine* when it first heard the Beatles, and Hendrix, and the Dead, and Bowie, and the Velvets, and The Stray Cats, and Television. But of course *it*



ATARI SUPER SYSTEM

The big product news of the season is the new Atari 5200 computer game machine, which is being described by enthusiastic home players as "everything videogames should have been but weren't." Costing about $100 more than the previous Atari home game computer system, the 5200 is definitely better than, as well as different from the previous system and, current competitors.

The 5200 is, in many ways, like the Atari 400 home computer without the keyboard. With a large memory and sophisticated internal controls all dedicated to playing videogames, the 5200 is a real arcade challenger.

Players initial reactions center around the high resolution graphics and the improved sound synthesis of the 5200. With a better picture and better sound, the 5200 also provides more complex and sophisticated games. Defender, for instance, is much improved as a 5200 cart over earlier versions. Even the game carts that aren't that much improved in game strategy offer a better graphic display, so no matter what game you play, the 5200 does make a difference.

The controllers for the 5200 are also changed from the earlier "joystick" units. With more responsive 360 degree control, which, by the way, is not self-centering and takes a while to get used to, the player won't get hand cramps trying to control screen images. There are four fire buttons instead of the two previously offered, and there are pause, re-set, and start buttons.

The controller also has a keyboard—called a keypad—which allows for more complicated game play. Each game cart for the 5200 comes with a keypad overlay to indicate extra controls (like adding hyperspace to a game plan) through the keypad.

For videogame players who aren't interested in having a home computer, but *are* interested in the best game action, the Atari 5200 is definitely a giant step in the right direction.

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

wasn't perfect, what was perfect was the message it carried. The *music*.

But the music doesn't count. Especially if I make my own on a blank audio cassette, from the radio. Or if there's so little new music worth buying that the record execs are worried about the mortgages on their houses in Westport and Malibu.

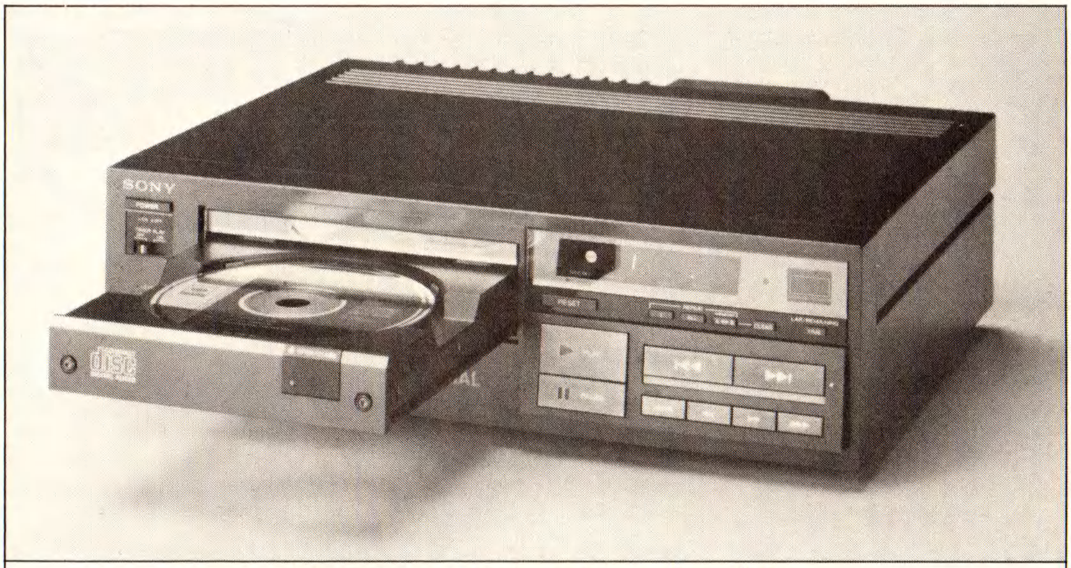
Enter the Japanese, who need something new to sell. And progress becomes the by-word. Time is now to melt down your record collection—because in 10 years time, buying a needle for the 33⅓ turntable will be like buying a needle for your Edison cylinder. Hard to get. Don't make them anymore.

There are two ways to move ahead in any technology. The cheap shot way is new for the sake of new, novelty for the sake of progress. The other way is to improve on the present—when, and if, it needs to be improved. This second method, however, is *impossible* if production-consumption are to be maintained; there are too many people who need jobs for what they make at their jobs to last too long. And if, by chance, in this day and age, they *do* produce something that doesn't fall apart instantly, then the consumer must be convinced that it is otherwise obsolete.

Such is the case with recorded sound. Records work too well, last too long, are much too satisfactory. Consumers actually *keep* their records, listen to them, don't throw them out. Goodness! *This* won't do! Especially if they don't have enough spare change to buy more new records on a weekly basis.

So the record companies and the Japanese have this plan, as I was saying, that will create a brave new world in the recorded sound business. A new record, which needs a new record player, and a new amplifier, and new speakers, and a few other new things that you'll have to go out and buy if you want to listen to music.

The basic progress involved here is to switch from analog to digital. To make records that record, store, reproduce sound better than they do now. Which is certainly possible to do. Admittedly the current 33⅓ plastic analog disc does have limitations and drawbacks: frequency limitations, true fidelity to the original sound recorded, deterioration through use, inferior manufacture. But many of these drawbacks are highly theoretical, no matter what you read in the state of the art hi-fi- magazines. Most people listen to recorded sound in



Sony's Compact Disc Player: do we really *need* it?

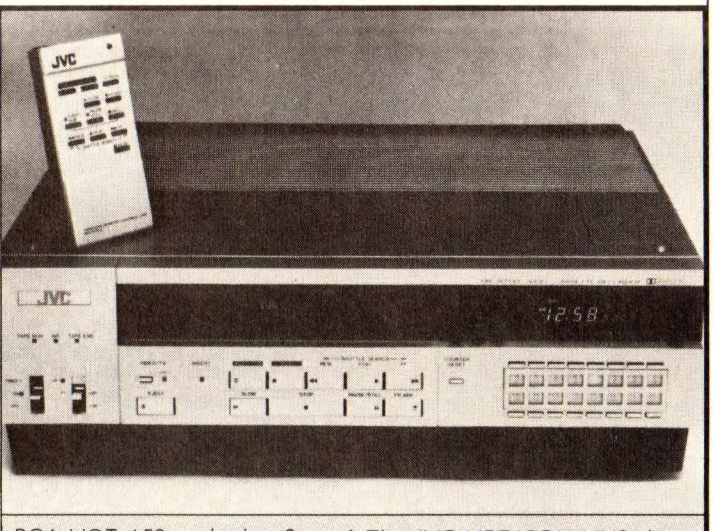
VIDEO BARGAINS

Video tape recorder prices are tumbling, and sometime this year the first under-$300 VTR will hit the discount stores. Already the Sanyo VCR 3900 is being discounted at $333 in New York City (unfortunately this Sanyo machine is a Beta rather than VHS), with several Beta and VHS models not far behind in the $379-400 range.

The concept of an under-$300 home video recorder-player is quite exciting, since it is half what VTRs sold for a year ago, and suggests that it is entirely possible that the VTR may get down to $199 in the not-too-distant future.

The price of video tape is also plumetting, with VHS T-120s now selling in NYC for as low as $7.95, where a year ago they were $12 to $15.

On the other end of the price scale, there are a number of new innovations that make the higher priced VTRs more interesting. Stereo audio is becoming the norm on the upper level VTR such as the RCA VGT-650 and what Sony calls Beta Hi-Fi. With Home Box Office and other pay cable movie channels planning to add stereo sound to their broadcasts, MTV already sending out their music in stereo, some video cassette rentals already in stereo, the concept of the VTR as part of the home stereo/TV system is developing.



Another high priced addition to the VTR is "editing." The JVC HR7650U VHS deck has insert and assemble edit facilities, which let anyone interested put together video tapes in a professional manner at home in their time.

The overall picture in home video technology is that the basic deck is becoming as cheap as the record turntable, and the more sophisticated decks are starting to offer more and more special features.

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

FIRST RATE SOUND

Does your home cassette deck have a LaserAmorphous head? A Linear Counter? Dolby C? *No?* Then throw it away *now*, before anyone finds out and takes that $400 you've been saving up to get your hair fixed and get down to your local hi-fi- shop where you can have all this and more with a new Sony cassette deck.

Sony has put two reasonably priced cassette decks on the market that have rather remarkable features considering their retail prices. The TV-FX66 ($320 retail) and the TC-FX77 ($400) are very high tech, and as Sony High Fidelity General Manager Osamu Naka says, "their two-motor tape transport and new Laser-Amorphous head, combined with features like Linear Counter and Dolby C, result in very high performance and reliability for the important $300 to $400 range."

If you're not up on the tech menu of buzz words, the point of both of these decks is that they are very steady in their mechanical tape transports, which produces smooth, accurate tape speed—with the result that the sound, especially at the low and high end is not distorted. As for the Laser-Amorphous heads, they make sure the transfer of signal from tape to cassette electronics is of superior fidelity, and that the heads are long lasting. The Linear Counter measures the actual time elapsed on the tape and shows this as a fluorescent display so the user can find selections with absolute accuracy during playback of a tape. A microprocessor is used to control the system for computer accuracy. Both decks also have Dolby B and Dolby C noice reduction, and "punch-in" record, full-logic controls. The more expensive FX77 also features a nine-selection Automatic Music Sensor, as well as several other useful but not crucial features.

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situations that limit the potential of the recording no matter what the technology. And the brave new digital record isn't going to change that one bit.

The first of these new records was developed by Philips and Sony. It is being called a Digital Audio Disc, although some refer to it as a Compact Disc. It uses laser beams and digital recording techniques to make a record that is smaller than the current album, will not deteriorate with play, and gives "studio quality sound." Whatever *that* is, since "whose studio and whose sound?" seem to be left out of the thinking here.

If you plan to listen to records on a hi-fi system that costs less than $3,000, you probably won't be able to tell whether you're listening to a digital disc or a regular album. In fact, you might want to buy a hi-fi system in the $10,000 range to *really* be able to tell that the new disc is working at peak performance.

Now, the basic idea of making recorded music storage a digital event is fine. There *are* advantages to digital with laser beam tracking. But if the manufacturers like Sony and Philips who are conscious of this *really* wanted to make the new Compact Disc honestly useful, they'd be creating a system that had something to do with the current boom in video and computers. Computer information storage takes place on a floppy disc which costs about $5 blank. Eventually video storage will be possible on this disc as well. So why not work out sound on floppy discs? Then the one home computer would be a computer, a video player and recorder, and a sound player and recorder.

Why not? after all, *that* would be progress: one machine doing the work of three, and doing it better. An honest benefit to the consumer in terms of cost, convenience, and quality.

The *why not*, of course, is that then the Japanese manufacturers and the American record companies and video

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PERSONAL STEREO MYSTERIES

Ever wonder what the difference is between one Walkman-type stereo and another? Well, let's do some comparison shopping with the new Sanyo models of their "Sportster" line of personal stereo cassette players. Sanyo has recently introduced eight new models, with prices that run $29.95, $39.95, $49,95, & etc., up to $119.95. For the purposes of a quick comparison, we'll choose the Sanyo MG8 ($29.95) and the Sanyo MG100 ($119.95). The MG8 includes cue and review and auto-stop at the end of play, locking fast forward and rewind, separate left and right volume controls, and comes complete with shoulder strap, carrying case, and headphones. In fact, it has most of the features that a couple of years ago would have cost you a good $100 or more. The truth is that Sanyo and other manufacturers have got the Walkman-type players down pat, and are now making stripped down versions like the MG8 at what might seem like impossible prices. On the other hand, the MG100, which retails for $90 more than the MG8, gives you everything but the kitchen sink as the top of the line model. It is mini-sized (less than 4" x 5" x 2") and has auto-reverse, Dolby noise reduction, mute switching, metal tape compatibility, soft-touch play control, locking fast forward and rewind with LED tape direction indicators, and comes with headphones and all the trimmings. Obviously, if you're going to stay wired up every time you go outside, the MG100 is your best bet, but for occasional private listening, the MG8 will certainly do the job for under $30.

Sanyo MG8

STEREO
SANYO M-G8
STEREO CASSETTE PLAYER

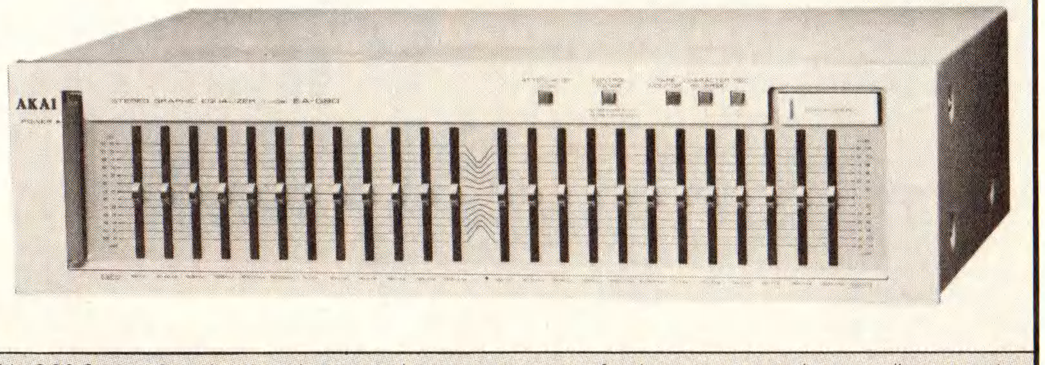
SANYO
AUTO REVERSE

Sanyo MG100

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

SOUND CONTROL

In the world of the ideal, absolute sound, records sound exactly the way they're made when you play them through your stereo speakers. Unfortunately, this idea is unusual as a reality, and many home music systems could do with what is known as an "equalizer" to shape the sound so that it is pleasing to the ear in a home environment. You may not be familiar with the word equalizer, but you're familiar with the function if you've ever used the bass and treble controls on an amplifier to make the sound a little more like the way you think it should sound. Bass and treble controls *are* equalizers, although they don't give you the kind of control you'd get over the sound if you used a separate equalizer component such as the AKAI EA-G90 Stereo Graphic Equalizer ($279.95 list).



Instead of just two controls (bass and treble), the AKAI G90 gives 12 controls over the color of the sound for each channel of sound. This allows the user to shape the sound to his or her ear with a good deal more accuracy than just two controls. The result is a final sound coming out of the speakers that is more balanced to the room environment. The G90 also features an equalizer defeat switch so you can listen back and forth to equalized and unequalized sound to hear the difference. The equalizer goes between the pre-amp and power amp in the sound system (some integrated amps allow it to be connected internally to their circuitry) and with the G90 a host of line-in/out, tape play/record connections are also possible. If you've never played with an equalizer and heard just how it can dramatically affect the sound you listen to, the G90 is a good one to try. You'll be surprised.

companies and computer companies would only have one product to sell, not three. Even though the idea of one medium shared among the various types of information to be stored would indeed be progress.

So, sometime later this year you're going to be told in glowing terms about the new record, the compact disc: it lasts longer, it sounds better, it looks neater. And it will be suggested that you abandon the current 33⅓ system, save up, and send your money to Japan, so everyone can keep working. It'll be suggested that somehow this new disc will make music *better*, that the paint brush is actually the painter, that the future is here now. But consider yourself warned. This isn't the future that's about to be foisted upon us, it's—dare I say it—*progress*.

PALACE BLASTER

The original concept of the so-called "ghetto blaster" was to provide AM/FM stereo radio, a cassette recorder/player, and as-large-as-possible speakers in an as-compact-as-possible box that ran on batteries and was more or less portable. If you've seen the array of these blasters now available, you're probably aware that they range from extremely compact (and not so loud) to extremely large (and very loud and heavy). In fact, Japanese manufacturers are now referring to the top end of the ghetto blaster line as 'mini-component systems,' and while they are still portable in the sense that they all lock together into one box with a handle, they are not really designed for taking to the beach or carrying on your shoulder down the street.

One such blaster mini-component system is the Yamaha Portable Compo PC-9. This is a rather amazing package of electronics that for some will have the appeal (and the reasonable price tag) that means the PC-9 could be their entire home sound system. Basically, the PC-9 is two speakers, a cassette deck, an AM/FM stereo tuner, and an integrated amplifier, all packed together in a twenty-six pound unit that measures just 21" x 12" x 9". But the number of controls and features and extras that are an integral part of the PC-9 make it a rather remarkable package.

These features include Music Search, which will automatically locate songs for you on your cassette tapes, Dolby Noise reduction, metal tape capability, soft-touch cassette controls, full-auto-stop, twin LED VU meters, record mute function, timer standby capability, mic/line mixing, FM stereo indicator, external antenna jacks, separate bass and treble controls, loudness control, phono inputs, and headphone jacks. If you're planning to use the PC-9 as a home system, a Super Woofer Speaker (NS-W1) is available to boost the bottom end of the PC-9 speakers to room rocking proportions.

BIT BY THE VID BUZZ

BY P. GREGORY SPRINGER

People die.

They may not be dropping off like summer flies in an electric zapper, but the Deadly Videogame has earned the right to carve more than a few notches on its joystick. Some undeniable, demonstrated power force lurks behind the electronic screen, and no player is entirely immune to its ray, lethal or not.

The word "addiction" gets thrown around loosely when talking about videogames. Are the games themselves truly addictive? Is it a physiological effect, working in the same ways that heroin and nicotine do, setting down cozily inside the body and demanding constant company? Or, is the appeal of gaming merely a habituation, a social phenomenon resulting from patterns of competition, ambition, religious ritual, and/or peer pressure?

What really gets socked when you put a quarter into a videogame? Is it your body? Your mind? Or only your wallet?

Examine this recent case: Mayo Clinic neurologists reported epileptic seizures occuring in two 15-year-old boys during games of Pac-Man. The seizures were triggered by the rate of light flickering on the videoscreens. Similar cases have been reported during instances of prolonged television viewing.

The standard 30 frames per second flicker rate for television and videogames is capable of inducing real and violent reactions. Peter Burkowski, an 18-year-old Berzerk player, had a heart attack after scoring in the top ten and initialing his win. What other, more subtle effects can happen?

Cardiologist Robert S. Eliot, M.D. at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, found in a study of 1000 patients that the heart rate increases up to 60 beats per minute and blood pressures rising up to 220 within one minute of starting a computer game. "It happens quite a lot but the patients have no awareness," he said, concluding that one full third of all games players have dangerous physical reactions to their scoring techniques.

Enough already! The modern body gets mauled by coffee, microwave ovens, pesticides in bananas, exhaust fumes from school buses, and nearly every other modern convenience anyway, doesn't it? Doesn't anything good happen to videogamers?

According to Dr. Arnold Sherman, an optometrist from Merrick, New York, and chairman of the Sports Vision section of the American Optometric Association, nine different visual skills are tested and improved every time a videogame is played: the ability to see clearly, to see motion clearly, to improve eye movement skills, to use eye/hand coordination, visual reaction time, visual adjustability or refinements, memorization, peripheral awareness, and focusing. He also believes that videogames help the eyes develop skills useful in both the classroom and in sports activities.

Is it your body? Your mind? Or only your wallet?

On the other hand, Dr. Francis Young, a Washington State University research psychologist, thinks an increase in nearsightedness has been caused by television and videogames. The lenses of the eyes distort, according to Young, as a reflex action over which individuals have no control. "When it occurs and continues for several minutes," Young has said, basing his hypothesis on the study of myopia in Eskimos, "abnormal pressures in the eyes are developed and the eyes are enlarged. Myopia is a growing problem with young people. It can begin in children as young as six and is progressive."

There has always been someone to cry warnings with every technological advance and with the introduction of any new medium of communication. While, with untested fears, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos outlaws videogame parlors "to protect the youth of the country," more informed studies conclude that videogames "allow (users) to actively manipulate the media and make them more responsive to...wishes and needs, enhancing intellectual functioning with increased opportunities for planful, logical and organized problem-solving." The results quoted above by Ellen Wartella, research professor at the U. of Illinois Institute of Communications Research, stress the "good" effects of videogames.

Obviously, you've succumbed to the video high or you wouldn't be reading this magazine. So, like the millions of other daredevils willing to risk sanity and self-preservation for the sake of a little stand-up adventure, take the following test. See how you rate on survival and smarts on the video battleground. Determine what your chances are to be terminally bit by the vid buzz. Are you socially integrated enough and physically fit to play video games? Are you vaccinated against the tragedy of loss and the frustration of futile competition? Scoreboard at the bottom, with no coin or medical assistance required.

VID BUZZ QUIZ

Situation #1:

After weeks of trying, you've finally scored over 500,000 on Robotron, saving hundreds of mommies and daddies from the deadly Grunts. You still have several fighters left and it looks like you're on your way to a million. Suddenly, next to you and tugging on your leg, is a crying 5-year-old, lost and looking for his real mommy and daddy. The Brain Wave is about to begin. What do you do?

a) Stick your face up to the game, fire away, and drown out distractions.

b) Pick up the kid, appease him by letting him help play the game, and hope you manage to stay alive until the owners of the child appear.

c) Leave the game and help the child find his parents.

d) Beat on the brat with a baseball bat.

Situation #2:

Last week, they had to pry you away from Joust. You dreamed of Silver Buzzards. The week before that, Q*Bert was your only obsession. You wouldn't eat until you'd arranged the carrot slices on your plate into a pyramid. One week earlier, the only love in your life was Tron, etc.

a) This perfectly describes you, a fickle-hearted fan.

b) You've been faithful to your favorite, Buzz Bomb, all along.

Illustration by Al Brandtner

BRANDTNER

c) You play new games but return to old ones now and then.

Situation #3:
The sexiest person you know has unexpectedly invited you over for the evening, dinner included. This comes as both a delight and a disappointment, since a new arcade is having a grand opening that same night, with all games free. As you read over the invitation for the third time, the one waiting for your response winks seductively.

a) You explain and ask for a rain check.
b) Make a counter-proposition that you both go to the arcade after dinner.
c) It's been weeks since you touched another human being. Forget about the electronic lover and accept.

Situation #4:
Both you and your best friend have been trying to reach the fifteenth level of Low Life, the new fave rave of the video arcade. So far your scores have been fairly close, but yesterday you discovered a new strategy for doubling your points in every level by jiggling the joystick up and down. It looks like you are going to be top name on the board, surpassing level 15 easily.

a) You share the new method with your friend right away.
b) You wait until you've broken all existing records before revealing the technique.
c) You immediately challenge your friend to a dual play competition.

Situation #5:
You go to the movie *Scanners*, and see a telepathic psycho interface his brain with the computer of a large industry through sheer will power. The computer explodes.

a) The idea is tempting, to be the mental equivalent of the computing process, but it's not realistic.
b) You are envious, wanting not only to understand but to BE a videogame.
c) Artificial Intelligence (and particularly the mating of man and machine) is disgusting.

Situation #6:
Last summer, you were touch football champion on the business intermural team, Vice President Squad. This summer, the office gang is counting on your practice and participation, but you're not sure you have the time or inclination for such exertion anymore. Some of the fun has gone out of playing. You wonder why?

a) Videogames provide the same entertainment as sports, anyway, don't they?
b) It's just a matter of getting back into shape after a lazy winter.
c) Exercise is a bore, definitely not the '80s style.

Situation #7:
You go to the movie *Rollercoaster*. Every time the screen shows the hundred-mile-per-hour trip down the Rocket Loop, you get nauseated and dizzy.

a) You tell yourself it's only a movie.
b) You have to step outside and get some fresh air.
c) You throw up, and enjoy it.

Situation #8:
Little by little, you've noticed that the work around the office has been getting done with more efficiency than it used to. You're getting more adept at organizing, making quick practical decisions, and storing those little odds and ends which used to clog up the works.

a) Your thought processes are becoming much more schematic since you've been outwitting game machines.
b) Jogging is responsible for improved physical dexterity and clearing your mind.
c) You're just imagining things. There's as much clutter as there always was and you're learning to live with it.

> **...Is the appeal of gaming merely a habituation, a social phenomenon resulting from patterns of competition, ambition, religious ritual, and/or peer pressure?**

Situation #9:
You are stranded on a desert island with only three videogames. Which group would suit your needs best?

a) Frogger, Pengo, Dig-Dug.
b) Joust, Galaga, Tempest.
c) Pole Position, Zaxxon, Defender.
d) Popeye, Donkey Kong, Burgertime.
e) You'd settle for just one, your favorite.

Situation #10:
The price of Baby Pac-Man has suddenly tripled, due to popularity. You'd really like to see if you could outdo your personal best, but the only way to try is to "borrow" the five-spot your roommate left lying on his desk.

a) Take the money; you can discuss the loan interest later (if he notices anything missing).
b) Decide to watch television more and save money.
c) Rob a bank.

GRADING

Add up your accumulated points:

1. *a)* 10; *b)* 5; *c)* 0; *d)* 10.

When games override a basic human concern, priorities must be challenged.

2. *a)* 8; *b)* 2; *c)* 5.

A certain degree of flexibility is important, as fanaticism is possible on both ends of the spectrum. True addicts can jump from game to game, while diehards contentedly follow the same old patterns burning ruts on their retinas.

3. *a)* 10; *b)* 8; *c)* 3.

Do you smoke after a hot game? When videogames replace sex, it's time for some serious evaluation of what kind of programming is going on, at the manufacturers and *in our heads.*

4. *a)* 5; *b)* 10; *c)* 7.

The real test of gaming is competition and ambition. In the future, corporate executives will likely be chosen on the basis of their ruthlessness with a specifically designed video board.

5. *a)* 4; *b)* 10; *c)* 0.

As Kraftwerk predicted, we are the robots.

6. *a)* 8; *b)* 4; *c)* 10.

Videogames provide many of the same physical sensations as sports, including adrenalin flow, heartbeat, and aggravated tension, without allowing the body to exert itself, build up cardiovascular strength, or relieve the nervous anxiety. Beware static cling.

7. *a)* 5; *b)* 0; *c)* 12

Two-D or Three, our bodies react to visual stimuli. The ability to balance those reactions is an indicator of withstanding ability in front of all forms of media.

8. *a)* 10; *b)* 4; *c)* 5.

Games can improve certain reactions, but they're unlikely to actually improve your regular work habits...that is, until they develop specified training games for those purposes. Right now, what develops is mostly random, and can't be considered too greatly beneficial (unless your work involves shooting lasers at Galaxians).

9. *a)* 3; *b)* 4; *c* 6; *d)* 5; *e* 10.

Is only your ego satisfied by the content and play of the game? Or do you prefer the ones that encourage human feelings, interaction, and story-telling?

10. *a)* 8; *b* 0; *c)* 10.

Eric Lewis McGill, 18, of Griffin, Georgia, dropped out of school to play Pac-Man. When his parents threatened to move him to his uncle's house in the country, away from his favorite arcade, he burned the house down. A Superior Court judge sentenced him to 10 years' ban on playing videogames. In Japan, theft among young gamesters who need more yen to play has become prevalent. In the end, crime does not play.

SCORING

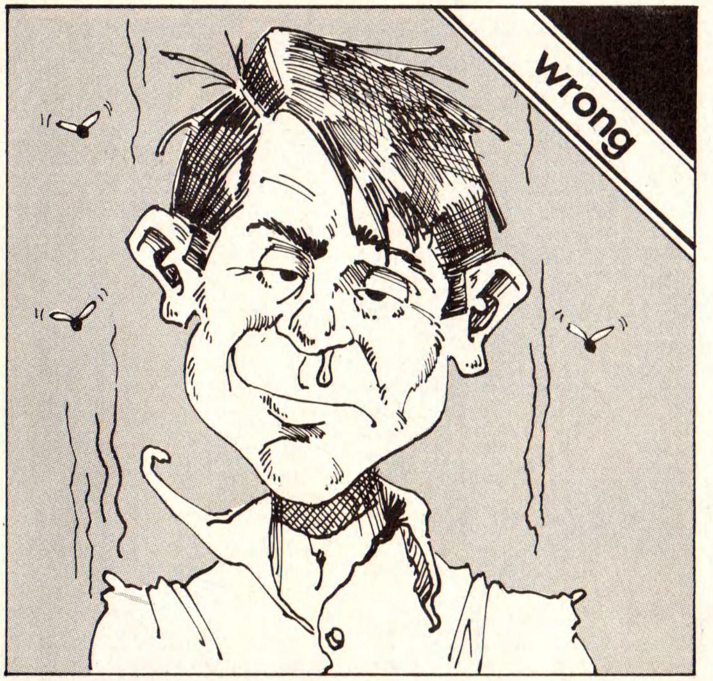
80-100: Cold Turkey recommended without delay.

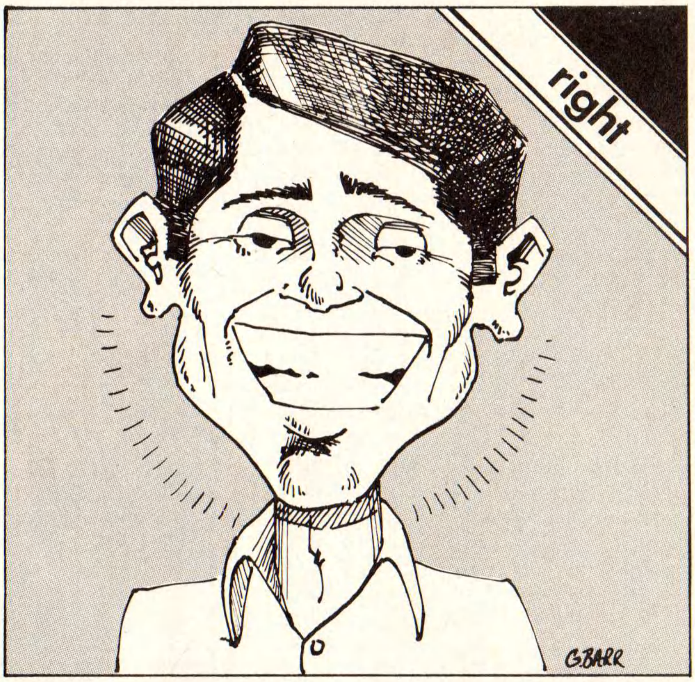
60-80: High Risk Addict and potential victim of Video Attack.

40-60: Moderation is the name of this game. Able to handle the stress and conflicts, while improving character and learning to interact with technology.

30-40: Overly casual attitude will resist the dangers (and also the benefits) of the video screen.

Below 25: Still playing Pong. ■





ARCADE DOs & DON'Ts

A Guide To Gaming Protocol

BY MARK J. NORTON

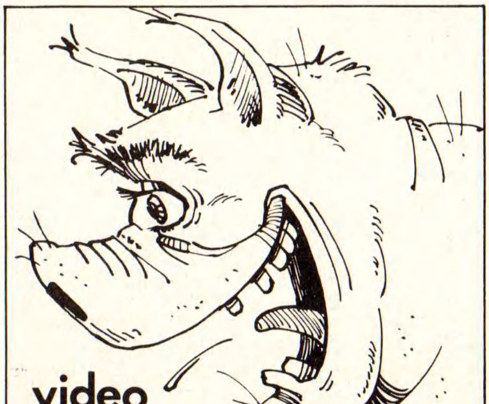
With the coming of the New Electronic age, we must deal with an entirely revamped moral code. A New Etiquette. Arcades have replaced the high school dance, videogames have replaced pinball, the times are changin', blah blah blah. If you spend any of your leisure hours stuffing quarters into machines at vid parlors, you must *still* deal with members of the human race. You must never forget your manners.

Before heading for your local arcade, take a long look in the mirror. Are your clothes neatly pressed? Is your hair parted handsomely? Are there any unsightly *thingies* hanging out of your nose? Remember: *don't* offend any of your fellow gamers with an unkempt appearance! If you're a slob, *keep out of sight*. Nobody needs another jerk like you to look at!

When you enter the arcade, *don't* push and shove your way to the front of the token line. There's never, *ever* a shortage of tokens. Besides, people get upset when they're shoved around, and it's very difficult to manipulate a joystick in a full body cast.

Don't throw your money at the arcade attendant. Place your money carefully in his hand—and when he gives you the tokens, thank him profusely. He may be having a rough day because the oil pump on his car broke down, or his wife divorced him last week, or his kid's got the mumps and his dog died. You can never tell. Put yourself in his place: there you are, having the *time of your life* playing games and talking to members of the opposite sex...while he's caged in behind the counter, earning minimum wage. Always remember—a little consideration goes a *long way*.

Since the arcade is bound to be crowded by the time you arrive, negotiate your path to your favorite game the way you wish others would. This is *definitely* the wrong time to practice your open-field blocking techniques. You'll be in tight quarters, so always say "excuse me" when gently brushing past people engaged in a game or waiting to play. *Never* punch, kick, gouge, spit, machine gun, tear gas, nuke or drop napalm on a gamer blocking your path. If you do, you can be *sure* you'll never win the Miss Congeniality Award, and your mother will be ashamed to admit she "whelped" you.



When waiting to play a game, *don't* distract the person occupying it. *Never* throw spit balls, pens, shoes, ashtrays, ducks, knives, pictures of Shelley Duvall, kisses, up, blunt objects, chairs, people, books, pizzas or carnivorous weasels. These are considered *uncivilized* methods of clearing people from games. Remember, Retardina, *patience is a virtue*.

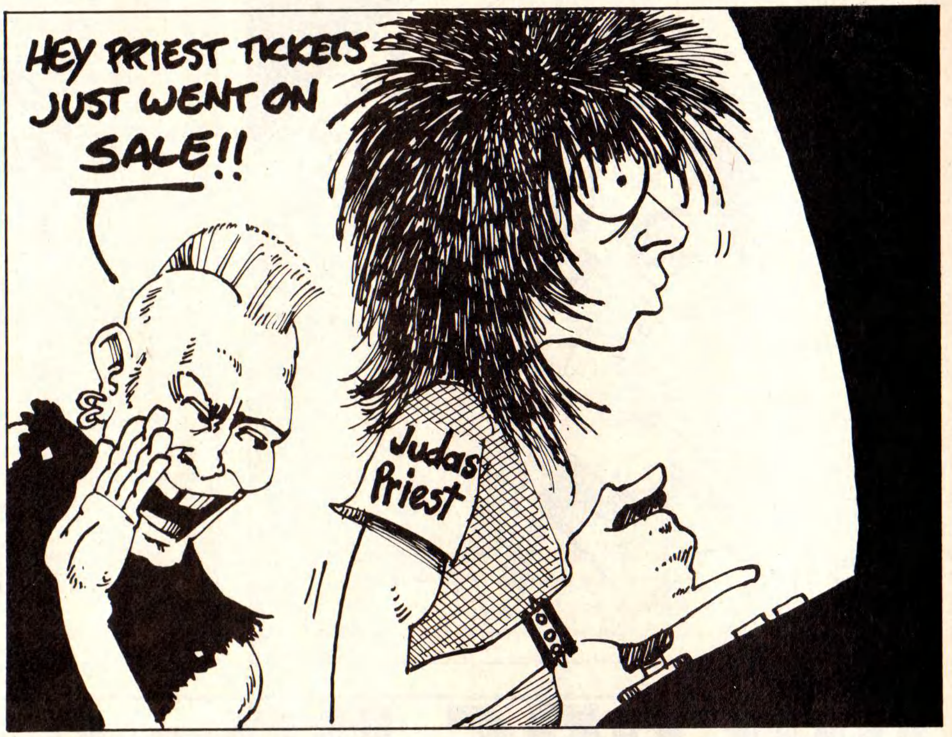
If the person appears to be hogging the machine, however, it's *entirely proper* to let the offensive party know he's committing a serious social aberration. There are *many* methods of displaying your displeasure with the video pig tactfully.

The most obvious method is applying a size 10 to the left buttock of the pigdog. When he turns around to see who kicked him where-his-head's-been-all-his-life, *smile* and ask if he'd like some free dental work. This ploy is highly recommended for professional football players, boxers and construction workers.

Illustrations by Glenn Barr

But if the video pig is a *big* video pig, call upon your natural wit and cunning. If he appears to be a punk rock geek, run up behind him and shout, "Clash tickets just went on sale!," or if he's a metal mutt, shout "Judas Priest tickets are on sale!" If he's that "other" type, God forbid, you might want to engage "him" in a discussion on the relative merits of Quentin Crisp's literary career. Or you can always use your head.

There are times when *none* of these methods will work. The pig might be deaf, or just too engrossed in the game to acknowledge your ranting and ravings. When this happens, you'll feel a sense of desolation flood your body. Your pulse will slow down. Your hands will tremble and tears will well up in your eyes. You'll want to put your fist through the nearest window. It will be *the most traumatic moment of your life.*

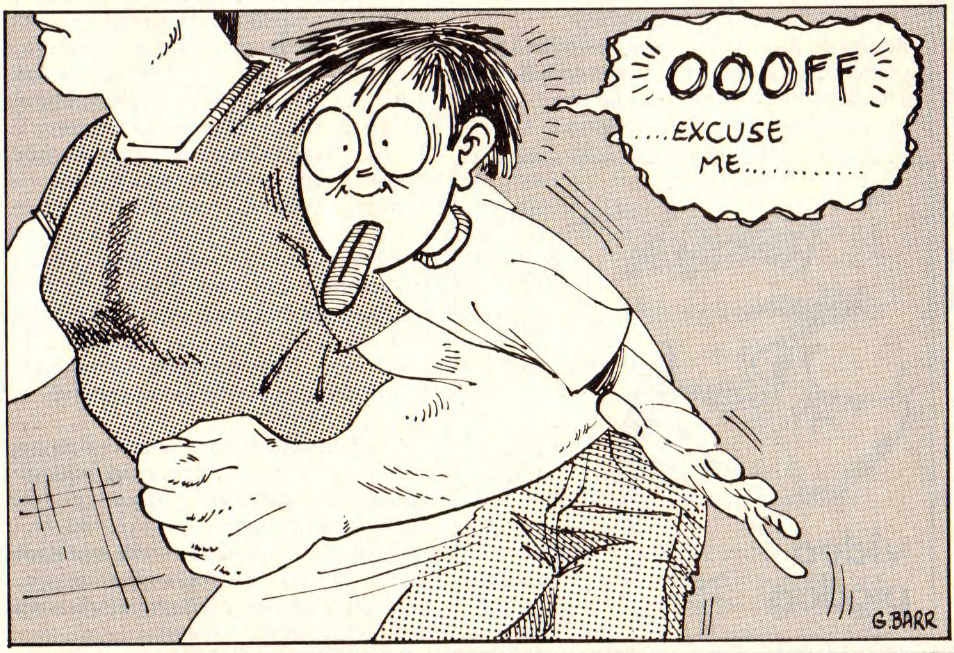

HEY PRIEST TICKETS JUST WENT ON SALE!!
Judas Priest

But one must *never* display their negative emotions at an arcade. It's *rude* to cry, scream, convulse, blow chunks or strangle babies. If you find yourself over-emotional when denied the pleasure of playing your favorite game, leave the arcade immediately and go directly to the psychiatric ward of the nearest hospital where they'll charge you thousands of dollars to tell you you're completely crazy, there's absolutely no hope and that the rest of your life'll be so miserable you might as well jump off a tall building. The cure is so simple, don't you agree?

When actually playing a game, remember there are "others" next to you. Just because you're scoring higher than you *ever have before* is no excuse to ruin everyone else's good time by swearing! Many ignorant players, unaware they're on Earth, utter *terrible* phrases when vidgaming. This is truly *awful!*

If you hear someone using foul language, at the arcade *or* anywhere else, ask if they *know* what they're saying, ask them if they'd mind *not using* those frankly disgusting words. Usually, the offender will cool it. If they continue, report them to the manager of the arcade. It's your responsibility as a respectable citizen.

Playing at the arcade can often be very exciting. And when a person is in an excited state, they "forget" certain things. Like where they're standing. Some video jockeys insist on practically *dancing* when engaged in a game: they think by using body English they can somehow improve their score. Which just isn't so. Be considerate of thy neighbor, brother, for he may rip thine lungs out.



Smoking can be a big nuisance at the arcade. Unfortunately, there isn't much one can do about it. The machines *themselves* promote smoking, by having an ashtray built into the side of them. It's really dumb when you think about it—a player lights a cigarette, takes a few puffs, sets it in the ashtray, and the smoke then wafts into the adjacent player's face. If the smoke stings his eyes when he's concentrating, it's literally *game over.*

This wouldn't sit too well with a serious, non-smoking player, but it's no cause for a violent confrontation. If the player's cigarette next to you is causing you to blow your game, wait until he finishes his round, then simply explain that his smoking is making you sick. Be polite, though. Just because the smoker will eventually *get emphysema and be attached to an iron lung for the rest of his life, spend all his life savings at the hospital where no one will visit him and nurses will make fun of him,* is no reason to be rude. You're *far* too erudite to cause a scene, don't you agree?

Video arcades aren't just for playing—they're for watching people play also. When a gamer's setting a new arcade record on a tough game, it's indeed *thrilling* to be part of the action. But *don't* scream in the player's ear, bump into him ask for a light for your cigarette or say "E.F. Hutton says..." Keep a respectful distance. If you happen to distract him to the extent of ruining his game, exit the arcade *immediately*—or you may be instantly transformed into a punching bag. As they say, pain *hurts.*

All in all, arcades are fun-filled places for young and old. A little common sense will keep it that way. ■

VID-KID OF THE MONTH

GENE SIMMONS OF KISS

Alright! Gene's no fool, and he knows where most of the Kiss Army spend their dough, being the videodrones they are! So here we see the amazing Gene defending the empire—waiting for the day that there will be a Kiss videogame to take the place of the band's pinball machine! Gene even has a photo album featuring naked pix of all his favorite video games! What a crazy guy, hey?

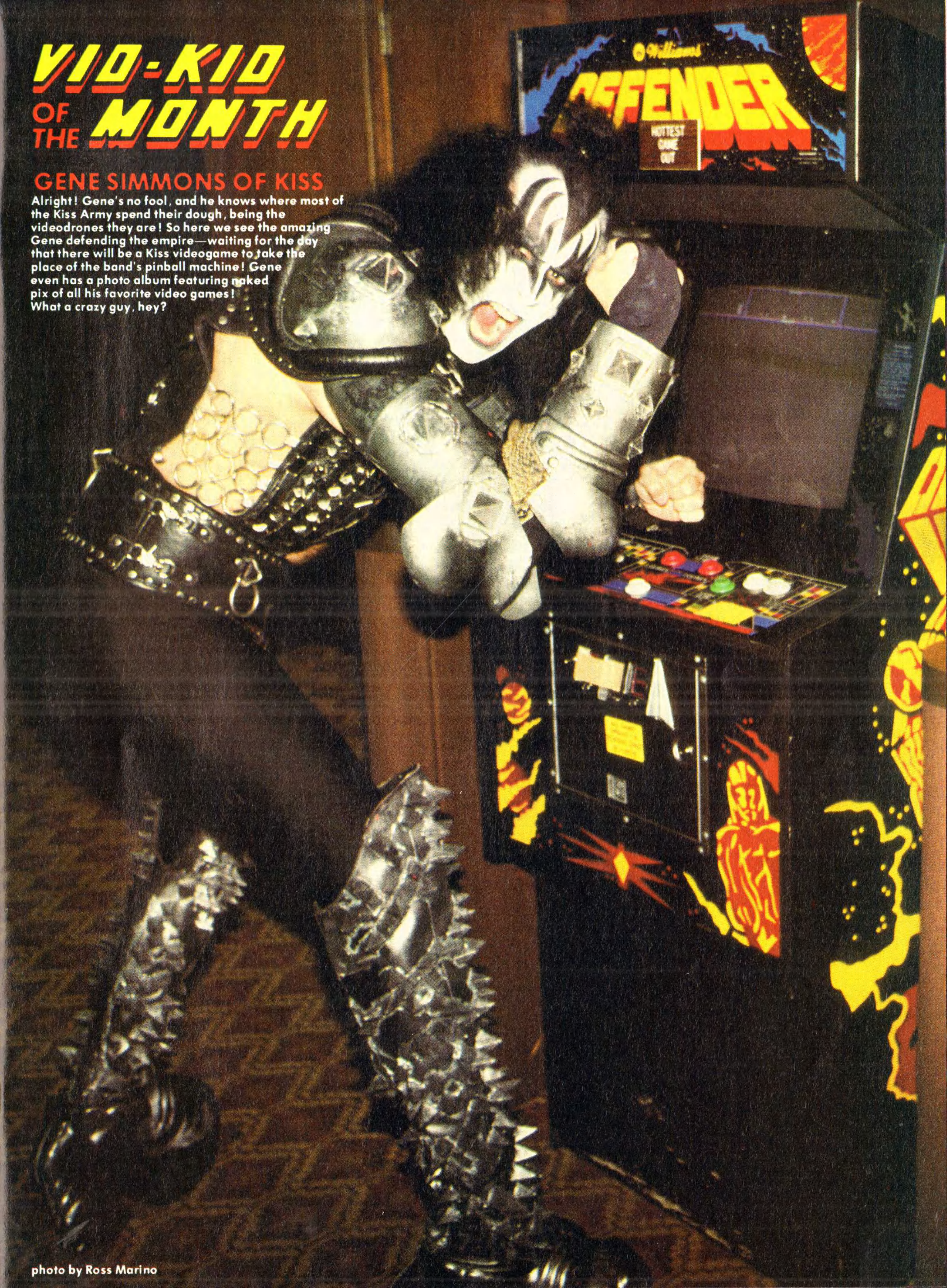
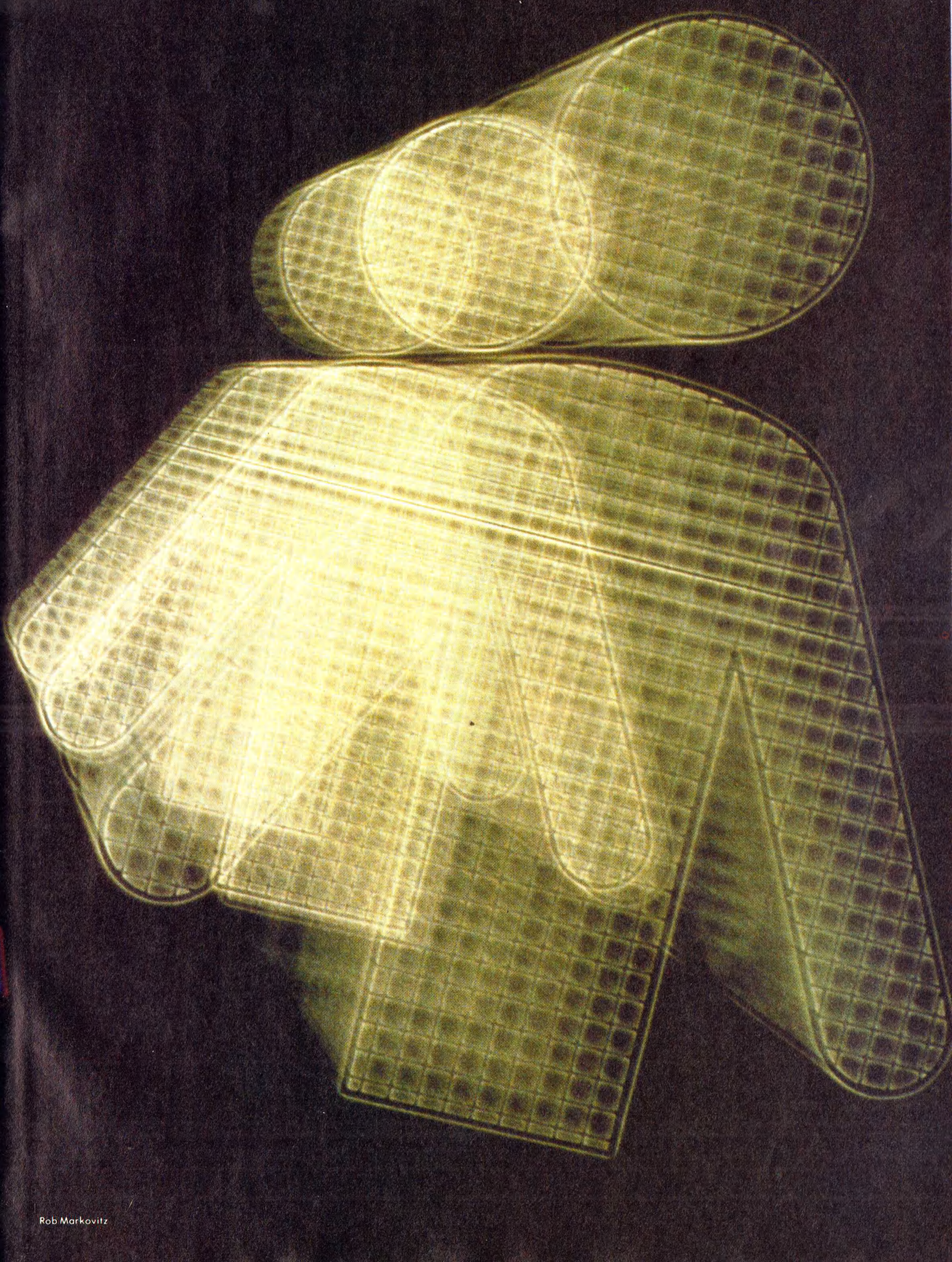


photo by Ross Marino

VIDIOT™'S GUIDE TO

THE
ELECTRIC
CIRCUS

HOME COMPUTERS



Rob Markovitz

BY RICHARD ROBINSON

There's a big difference between wanting a home computer, buying a home computer, and having a personal computer at home that will actually do some computing for you. In this special guide, **VIDIOT'S** *editors do what no other magazine has ever done: tell you the truth about home computers.*

The Apple II might be right for you!

THE COMPUTER

The basic idea is fantastic. A machine that can store, sort, and produce information instantly, in a manner that's almost impossible for the average brain to follow. Thus saving time, labor, guessing, and ultimately putting the right facts at your finger in the right order at the right time.

The reality is a little less fantastic. The computer is a complex instrument of highly sophisticated micro-electronics that, while capable of seemingly impossible feats of memory and logic, requires a good deal of expertise to operate properly.

The truth is that fewer people need home computers than think they do. For unless you have a specific need for a home computer, about the only thing it's good for, in the average home, in a general way, is gathering dust.

This doesn't mean you couldn't find something useful for a home computer to do—or that it's not educational to have a computer, so you can begin to interface with it to understand how it works. What it means is that the home computer is not the end-all, save-all that the advertisements suggest. Because, after all, just how much do you have to *compute* every day that a computer would compute for you? Probably not much more than addition, subtraction, and multiplication—which you can do on a pocket calculator (itself a computer), with a lot less trouble and expense.

Some specially designed computers are instantly useful at home. Specifically the computer game machines designed by Atari, Intellivision, Coleco, et al. But these are not personal/home computers in the true sense, because they only do one thing, and can't be reprogrammed to do something else.

If you're sincerely interested in owning a home computer, the first question you must ask yourself is: *what am I going to use it for?* To teach me French, or how to type, or to take care of home finances, or keep a list of everything I own, or run off mailing address labels or type form letters, or *what?* If you have an idea, good. The next step is to see if there's a computer that has a program that will tell the computer—and you—how to do what you want.

But if you'd just like to have a computer because it's the thing to have, forget it. Paint some buttons on an old shoe box. It's cheaper and just as effective. And don't think that you'll just buy a computer and figure out later what to do with it. That, really, is an absolute waste of money.

Some honestly enterprising and digitally-minded people may want to get a computer so they can learn to program it and create something out of nothing. That is possible, it's exciting, but it also requires a rather *fanatical* interest in computers, patience and time, and a basic aptitude for dealing with the computer as a blank machine. It isn't something that's soothing for your spare time, like building ships in bottles.

COST FACTORS

A real computer costs about $1,500. With a printout, it will cost from $2,200 to $3,000. That's the truth. Anything less will not do a complete job.

So how come there are ads for computers that start at $88? Because you can buy a "computer" for $88, but it won't compute much. It's just a toy—sort of a joke that keeps consumers on their toes and discount stores in business.

It *is* possible to buy a computer for less than $1,500 that will do the job of a $1,500 computer—but only after you've purchased the extra pieces that will cost you the difference of the $1,500. Another joke, but a little less funny.

KEYBOARDS

Many inexpensive computers have keyboards which are nothing but a sheet of plastic with letters printed on them—Timex Sinclair, Atari 400, and others. Some inexpensive computers have real typewriter keys, but not full sized—Texas Instruments makes one. A few inexpensive computers have full size typewriter type keyboards—The Vic 20 and The Atari 800.

If you want to actually type on your computer keyboard (and you will, if you plan to really use the keyboard to enter information), you want a full-sized typewriter keyboard. Unless you're very small indeed—say about 18 inches tall.

The keyboard is what you really get with inexpensive computers. That's all, just a keyboard plus enough internal memory so the computer looks like it's doing something when hooked up to a TV screen in the store. The keyboard is not the complete computer by any means, but it *is* important, because it's the interface between you and the computer.

So if you want to buy a computer and can only afford the keyboard to start, we suggest the Vic-20, the Atari 800, or the Radio Shack 26-3004 TRS-80 keyboard.

As we mentioned, the salesperson will probably call this keyboard a "computer." After all, the manufacturer does. But you're still quite a ways away from actually owning a computer that will do much—then again, you've only spent a few hundred dollars so far.

MEMORY

How much information a computer can store and process is very important to how much work the computer will do. To get anything useful out of your computer, you need from 32K to 64K of internal memory. This is enough to store

The Commodore Vic-20 has a full-size typewriter keyboard.

sophisticated command programs in the computer, and to have enough room left over to store the information in the memory you want the commands to process.

The keyboards listed above don't come with this kind of memory capacity. Instead, they're referred to as being "expandable" to 32, 48, or 64K of memory.

"Expandable" means you have to go back to the store and buy more parts. The Vic-20, for instance, sells for about $150 at a discount. For this, you get an excellent keyboard and 5K of memory built-in. For another $250 or so, you can buy all the memory expansion modules to give you 32K of memory. So to get full potential out of the Vic-20, the cost is actually $400 discounted, *not* $150. The same is true of all inexpensive computers.

There's also usually a limit to which an inexpensive computer can expand its memory: 32K in the case of the Vic-20, 48K for the Atari 800, 16K for the Timex Sinclair. After that, if you need more memory, it's time to buy a new computer.

More expensive computers come complete with 48 to 64K of memory, as reflected by their prices. When you get up in the $1,500 range, there are many choices, all with excellent keyboards (though you may like the "action" on one better than another) and full complement of memory: Apple, Franklin-Ace, Osborne, Kay-Pro.

The Atari 400 has the right kind of price tag for beginners.

STORAGE

There are two ways of storing information for later use with a computer: a cassette recorder or a magnetic disc. Initially, the information and program commands of any particular program are put into the computer memory: thus the need for 64K over, say, 8K, if you really want a complicated set of program commands and space to store lots of information you're entering into the computer. Once the information is in the computer, a method is needed to "dump" it out of the computer to "save" it. This is done by transferring the information to another unit—either a cassette tape or a magnetic disc which records the information and holds it, until you want to dump or "load" it back into the computer for use.

Most inexpensive home computers offer a cassette recorder for an extra $75 or so, to be used for information storage. This sounds good in the ads, but in reality the use of a cassette for storage is

TIMEX sinclair 1000

Pictured here is the inexpensive Timex Sinclair.

sort of a slow joke, "slow" being the buzz word here. Every time you use the cassette to save or load information, you'll find yourself ready to take a walk around the block while it does the job, and also realize that this is not the lightning speed you've heard computers are capable of.

To get real action out of a computer, you need at least one— preferably two— disc drives, which use floppy magnetic discs to store and retrieve information. A disc drive costs about $400. (All that on to the $200 for the keyboard, and the $250 to expand the memory, and you're up to over $800 for your inexpensive computer). The floppy disc can hold upwards of 64K of information (which it should, since you have to be able to dump as much info onto the disc as you're working with in the computer), and provides split-second access to that information.

The $1,500 range computers either come with one or two disc drives built-in (like the Osborne) or the disc drive is part of the package price (like the Apple II).

The disc drive is also important because you buy programs to tell your computer what to do on discs.

DISPLAY

The computer must be hooked to a TV screen if you want to see what it's doing. There are all sorts of TV screens used to display computer read-outs. The cheap computers allow you to use your home TV screen, the same way you'd use it for a videogame machine. This isn't bad, and shouldn't be considered a drawback, except that it *does* tie up your TV set and requires you locate your computer system nearby—which can make for hardship among viewers and be quite uncomfortable for the programmer, who has to try to type onto the keyboard on his knees, in front of a TV table.

There are special monitors made to display computer read-outs. Many of them have green (sometimes amber) tinted screens, which is easier on the eyes. Some have higher resolution screens than do normal TVs, which makes it easier to read the computer read-out typefaces. Computer monitors cost from about $160 for a Sanyo B&W or BMC green to about $300 to $400 for a NEC color monitor.

The $1,500 range computer often comes with a monitor. In some cases this can be a drawback. Where The Apple II and the Franklin-Ace 1000 have monitors that are detachable from the keyboard (and therefore replaceable), the Osbourne has a small monitor built-in—which may be handy, but isn't as easy to stare at.

PRINT OUT

There are times when the computer programmer needs to have a "hard copy" of the information in the computer. This is acquired by connecting the computer to a computer printer (in some cases very much like a typewriter). Printers are available for all computers, expensive and inexpensive. The quality of the final printing and the speed at which the printer prints-out, however, vary with price.

For general reasonable speed use, a printer such as those made by Epson is fine, the cost being from $600 to $700. If you want typewriter letter quality at high speed, however, Xerox's Diablo printer is the best answer—and the cost on this is about $2,200.

PROGRAMS

Available programs are where small, inexpensive computers really feel the heat. Computer programs are expensive (ranging to about $200 per program), and the more useful they are, the more necessarily sophisticated they are. The usual real program is on a floppy disc, costs about $200, and needs a $1,500 range computer to function.

Programs are also where the home computer buyer usually feels the heat, as well. Because unless the buyer knows what he or she wants to use the computer for—and then checks, to see if any particular computer offers that program—the chances are the buyer will get taken.

For instance, say you want a program that will allow you to maintain a mailing list and have the computer type out labels so you can put them on envelopes to do mailings. Your first question is: is there a mailing list program available? Second: how much memory is required (the program may need more memory than the "basic" computer comes with)? Third: how much better are the other mailing list programs available for other computers? The answer will no doubt surprise those who planned to spend $88 for their home computer.

Since no computer is better than the programs available for it, and since you shouldn't plan on writing your own programs (that's why programs can cost $200 a copy; they're difficult to put together, honest), it's best to make a thorough study of the available programs for the computer you plan to buy. Don't get suckered into some crap about how more programs will be available "soon." Find out what exists *now* when you put your money on the counter.

Programs make or break a computer system—that's why Atari in the low-priced field) and Apple (in the $1,500 field) are so popular. They've paid a good deal of attention to the programs the user will use.

THE FINE POINTS

If you can find someone who knows about and uses computers before you buy—preferably not a salesman—learn something about them. You'll hear all sorts of things, some of which may be surprising. Some folks who own Apple II's will tell you it's too slow, or complain that you can't make safety copies of your program discs with it. Others will admit that the keyboard action on the Osborne isn't as good as on the Franklin-Ace. Some will know which programs are superior to others, even though they're supposed to do the same thing. Do your homework.

PURCHASE

Like all other electronics these days, computers are sold at discounts by some stores and list price by others. It is certainly wise to shop around—but it is also wise to buy from somebody who can help you out if anything goes wrong, doesn't work, or needs to be repaired. ■

ARCADE ACTION

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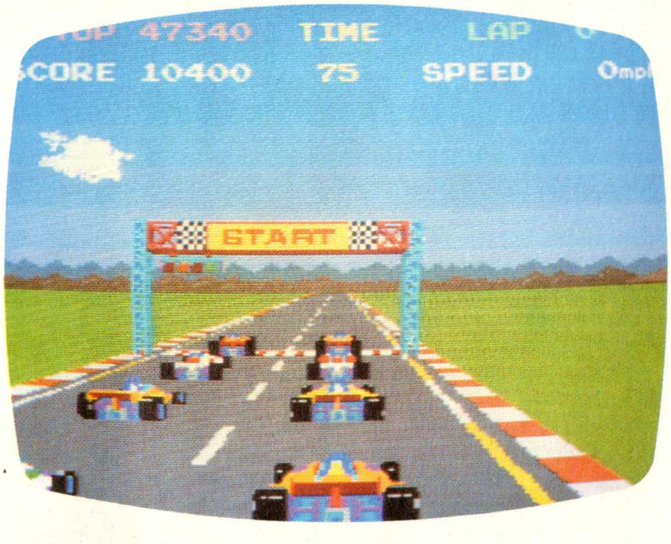
THIS MONTH'S WINNERS

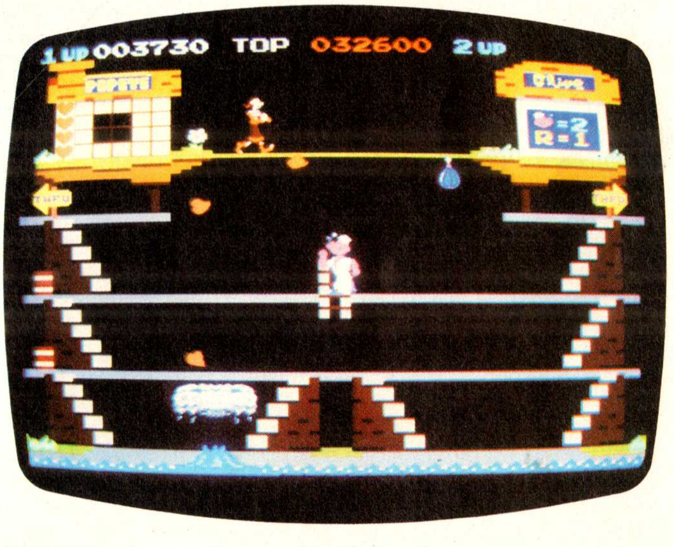
(Arcade Action's winning games, listed in order of popularity, are the 10 most-played games in the country as VIDIOT goes to press.)

BY P. GREGORY SPRINGER

1. **POLE POSITION**
2. **POPEYE**
3. **JOUST**
4. **Q*BERT**
5. **JUNGLE HUNT**
6. **MOON PATROL**
7. **TIME PILOT**
8. **FRONT LINE**
9. **BABY PAC-MAN**
10. **SUPER PAC-MAN**



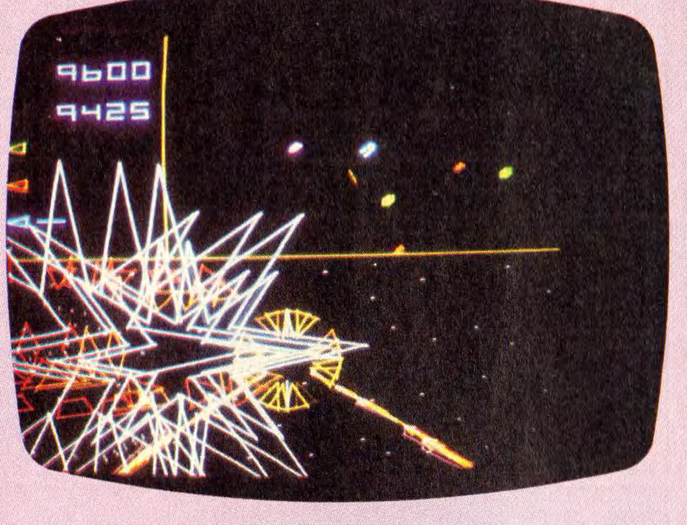
POLE POSITION - Prepare to Qualify! You won't, if you don't get 73 seconds or better on the time trials. Pole Position whipped Turbo off the scorecard this month, jumping right up into the ratings as #1. Mt. Fuji patiently waits in the background scenery of the Grand Prix, probably the only peaceful thing about the game. The machine-gun shaped Fuji Speedway offers stiff competition for all driving. Your speed is recorded at the top of the board if you dare take your eyes off the road to look, but the peak speed is noted at the end of the race. For those who don't maneuver so well, in either the stand-up version or the engrossing sit-down booth, the temptation is to drive away from the 2.709 mile track and head up into those springtime mountains in the background. Can you do it? Nah. Although the graphics of Pole Position are cleverly kinetic, allowing the car to veer off the road (with bumperstrip sounds to match), there's a limit to the horizon. And the inevitable crash is a spinning, humiliating destruction of smoke and fury. If you can handle hairtrigger steering wheel control, you'll impress most jalopy drivers around, as well as the husky-voiced female who announces at the starting line. It's a fast track, with best players clocking in under 4 minutes total, but the run for the money is intense, realistic, and gutwrenching.



POPEYE - Brutus changes his clothes from scene to scene, so he can't be too disgusting, despite his beer gut and the leftover six-packs he hurtles at our hero, Popeye. With spinach and pipe, Pop pursues love tokens from his skinny sweetheart, including tossed hearts, love songs, and pleas for help. Meanwhile, Brutus belches his way between Popeye and Olive's neighboring houses, trying break up the match. Later on in the scenario, they battle it out aboard nautical ship. Such triangles are made only in the comic strips, and Popeye must catch Olive's hearts before they sit at the bottom of the screen and break, a potential catastrophe as painful and final as a punch to the jaw. Brutus moves with more energy than he should for his size and disposition, tossing and prancing and groping underneath the playing plane. A witch tosses bouncing skulls, too. So Popeye must be nimble and eat spinach, crunch the can on Brutus's head, clobber the flying skulls and beer bottles, and wobble up stairs and masts to capture the passion of the old Knob Knees herself. This famous affair of the heart, unfortunately, is almost a private one, since the decorated border of the screen bars onlookers from the action. Only the player gets a glimpse. But with all those favorite characters around, famliarity breeds content. It's cute as the dickens and Fred Flintstone can't be far behind.

Screen photos by Larry Kaplan

STAR TREK



ARCADE ACTION CLOSE-UP

Little in life could ever be so predictable as the inevitable arrival of the Star Trek videogame. It was only a matter of time that the two forms met formally, shook hands, and put us all in Captain James T. Kirk's driver's seat.

After all these years, it's both an honor and a challenge to be asked to fill those boots.

The big surprise is that none of the famous television characters appear on the screen of Sega's difficult and sophisticated game. No Kirk (We're supposed to be Kirk). No Scotty. No Uhura, or Sulu, or Dr. McCoy, or pointy-eared Mr. Spock. No dapper costumes. No "beam me up." Not even a Khan or a Tribble.

Star Trek is remarkably free of cute or multi-layered graphic composition; concentrated effort has been put into the design of game action itself, not in giving the player a visual show.

The U.S.S. Enterprise looks like a dime-sized dogtag floating in screen space, encountering Klingons of various colors and power. Once every sector, the screen is cleared to admit the deadly distributor of space mines, the Nomad. Mission: Destroy Nomad while avoiding Klingons and purple Anti-Matter Saucers.

Attempts to involve the player as the character stretch beyond the lack of any face on screen. The game is clearly designated as a Strategic Operations Simulator, not a fantasy story enactment. The idea is that the player, as a would-be Kirk or Kirkian successor, must train himself in the fighting operation of the U.S.S. Enterprise.

Nothing so trivial as "points" are accumulated; the trainee earns ·Strategy Training Units (STU's) for his victorious endeavors.

"Welcome aboard, Captain," Mr. Spock's electronically simulated voice welcomes us into every training session. At the drop of the quarter, the theme song also blares forth triumphantly.

The video screen is divided into three separate parts. The smallest rectangle, upper left, keeps inventory of the available shields, photons, warp time, and STU's accumulated (for one or two players). When all these weapons are depleted, the simulation is complete—the game ends.

Unlike most mere games, Star Trek captain trainees have only one ship to operate. When you lose the Enterprise, you hang up the controls. The series is canceled, so to speak.

Because shields automatically protect the Enterprise until they are depleted, some misunderstand the game and believe that two-person play is impossible. Not so. Play (excuse me, training) proceeds by sectors. When the Klingons or Nomad in one sector have been eliminated, training resumes for the second in command.

Sector 1.1 has three Klingons and one Starbase, each introduced in large scale before shrunk down to pinhead size for fighting. The battlefield in space takes place in the upper right third square of the screen, an overview of the Enterprise and everything around it. Most trainees observe this part of the screen during battle simulation, unlike Stargate and other multi-control games in which the specific partial view gets the most attention.

The lower half of the screen provides a subjective viewpoint, looking out the Captain's window on the war. Distant stars pass by with every thrust of the ship. Klingons and Saucers come into distant view and loom large as they are approached. The Starbase, for docking, refueling, and repairs, welcomes the player aboard.

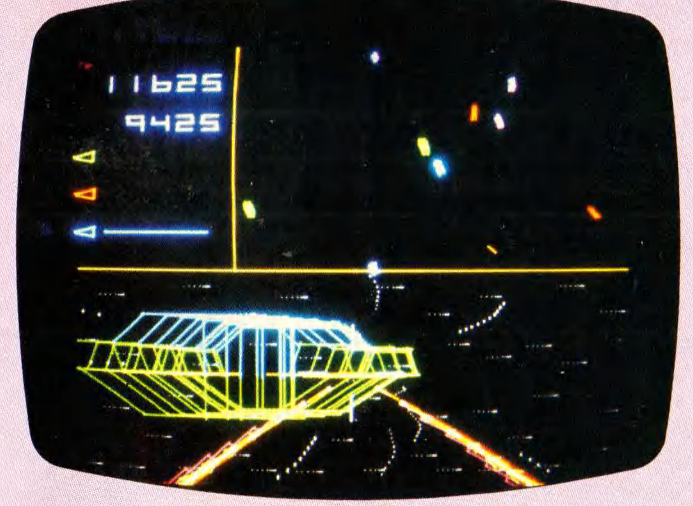
Although the graphics on the lower window screen are the best in the game, few can fight successfully by paying close attention to it. For one thing, you can't see what kinds of Klingons are readying to attack from the rear.

But learning to use the bottom screen for accurate aim, and to quickly dodge Klingon phaser fire, is a must. Double vision or acute peripheral ability comes in handy.

Sectors 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 increase the numbers and kinds of Klingons attacking the Enterprise and the Starbase docking stations. Sector 2.1 is the trainee's first encounter with the Nomad, a white speck which moves in a jagged fashion across space, leaving blue explosive flyspeck mines behind him. Shooting the Nomad without setting off a chain reaction of mines, which would in turn destroy the Enterprise if it fires from within close range, earns the trainee 30,000 STU's, and Sector 2.2 begins. Every new Sector is an encounter with a Nomad.

The player has four shields to begin. As Klingon fire scores against the Enterprise, the shields automatically engage until they are depleted. When all shields go, any hit incurs damage and getting to a Starbase is imperative. After shields go, then the powerful exploding photon bombs are depleted, and finally warp power is used up. When supplies are gone, the Enterprise dies.

Starbases increase in number with the Sectors, and docking adds to all supplies as well as allowing the Enterprise wounds to be patched. "Damage repaired, sir," Sulu's voice informs us. (Note: a representative from Sega swears the voice is Scotty, but it sounds like the wrong accent to me. I think it's Sulu talking.)



Docking may be a priority when supplies are sinking, but it might be advantageous to kill the Klingons and get through some Sectors without using the priviledge. For every Starbase still standing unused at the completion of a Sector decimal, 1000 STU's times the number of the round are added to the score. Only 250 STU's times the number are added for used Starbases and no bonus is awarded when Red Klingons have totally destroyed it by repeated fire. In other words, every Starbase standing unused in Sector 1.3 (or round three) adds 3000 points to the score, versus 750 for three used Starbases. Sector 2.2 counts as round 8.

Depending upon how your Simulator is rigged, bonus shields, photons, and warp time are added every 10,000 to 40,000 STU's. Average machines offer them at 30,000.

Although the storage inventory part of the screen only shows up to 4 shields, a total of 255 can be won. If anyone out there manages to do this, however, he's probably a Venusian.

So, you may be asking, what's the difficulty? You shoot the Klingons and bomb the Nomads, right?

Wrong. The playing board for Star Trek involves at least two hands, four fingers, and the aforementioned dual vision to operate successfully. For the left hand, a smooth spinning knob controls the direction of the Enterprise. It takes several turns (or whizzed spins) of the knob to make the ship maneuver in a 360 degree motion. On the right, an index finger button controls thrust, a middle or third finger button operates phaser fire. A little lower near the thumb, a photon bomb button waits for orders, and in the middle up for grabs is the warp mechanism button, which jets the Enterprise at a speed only deadly White Klingons can begin to approach.

It takes more than one training session to get the feel of the instruments at your disposal. A practiced player runs his hands over the instrument panel like Liberace playing "Humoresque." It's a sight to see.

The first Sectors are slow enough to allow you some time at bat. Red Klingons tend to ignore the Enterprise and attack Starbases. They are easier to kill from the rear. Purple Klingons come after the ship, sometimes from the rear. The Enterprise can only fire in a forward direction, whether shooting phaser fire or aiming longer distance photon bombs out to massacre any particluar cluster of Klingons.

Purple Klingons turn white after too much time is spent in any one Sector. They roll around in space, attack suicidally toward the Enterprise, and are real nasty in groups. If one hits you, you lose two shields. They mean trouble, and unless you are facing them, they'll ram you mercilessly. The best defense is to warp to a safe distance, turn and fire a Photon, and without waiting for detonation, spin out and away.

Actually, that tactic is useful throughout the game. Warp is one of the most useful tools in the game for positioning the ship to good advantage, even though it's hard to reach at first and means removing your finger from the fire button. Get used to using Warp, and you'll last much longer.

During Nomad rounds, steer clear of the mines, looking for wider pastures in space. Timing isn't as important; sometimes waiting pays off. The mines tend to explode after a time because of the pressure of no oxygen in outer space. The chain reaction, if conveniently at a distance, gives more maneuvering time and lets you wait until the Nomad zigs your way for a clean shot at it. But, it's best to obliterate it as soon as possible. That's the mission, after all. No STU's are awarded for the destruction of mines.

The Anti-Matter Saucer is a purple diamond which appears at random, moving through space in a confusing manner. It takes a photon to destroy, but if it attaches to the Enterprise, it drains all the warp out of it. Smashing it with a well placed photon earns 5000 STU's.

Every Klingon, regardless of color, dies to earn you STU's, increasing by 25 per round. Most games start giving 100 STU's per Klingon in round one.

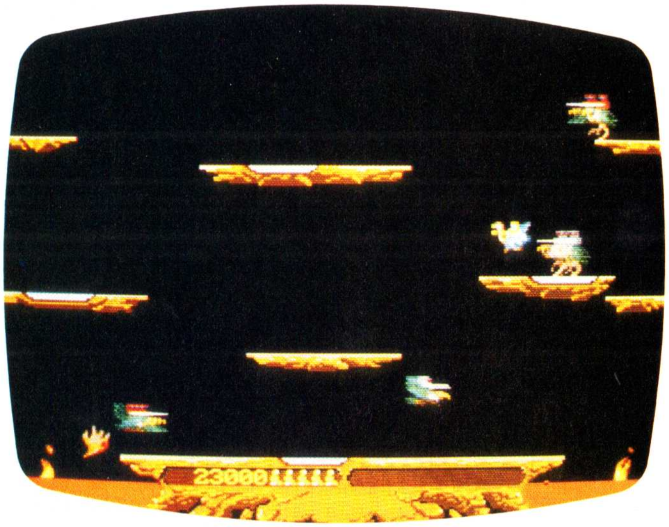
Because STU's don't mean more ships, only shields, many players prefer to concentrate on docking on the Starbases for the replenishment of shields. But earning as many STU's as possible also adds to the length of the game. It's up to you to decide when it may be better to dock or to hope a round ends with an unused, more valuable Starbase.

Dodging with ease of maneuverability is really the name of the game in video Star Trek. Once you've mastered the aim and avoid capabilities that the bottom screen gives you, you'll find the simulation exercise to be an invigorating experience.

Sega's even taken care to duplicate the sounds of the phasers, the photons, and the warp, so that your turn as Captain is as authentic as possible.

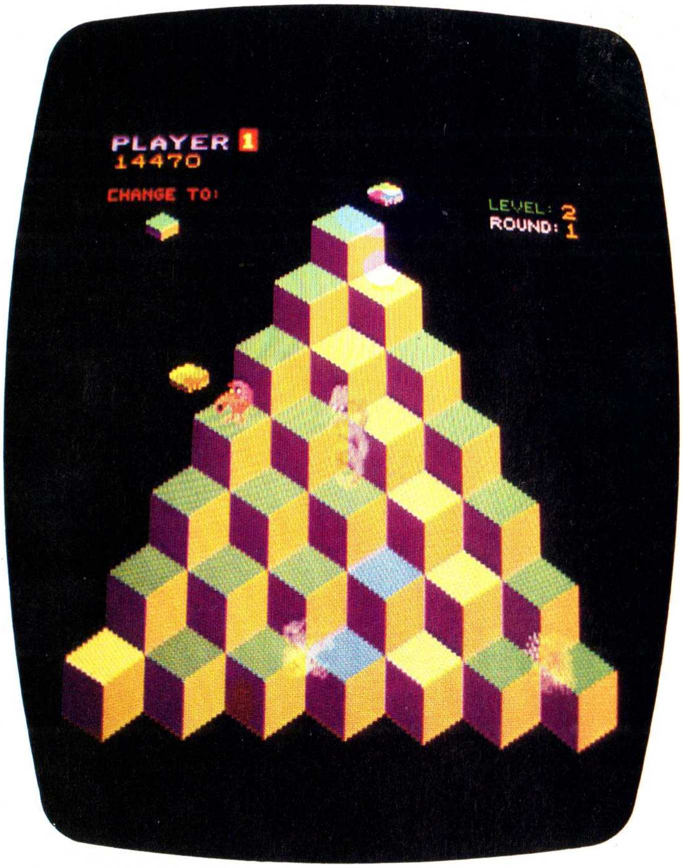
Welcome aboard, Captain. As thousands attest, Star Trek is a way of life, and Sega's video game is an extension of that phenomenon.

STAR TREK
STRATEGIC OPERATIONS SIMULATOR
NCC-1701
STAR TREK
STRATEGIC OPERATIONS SIMULATOR
SEGA



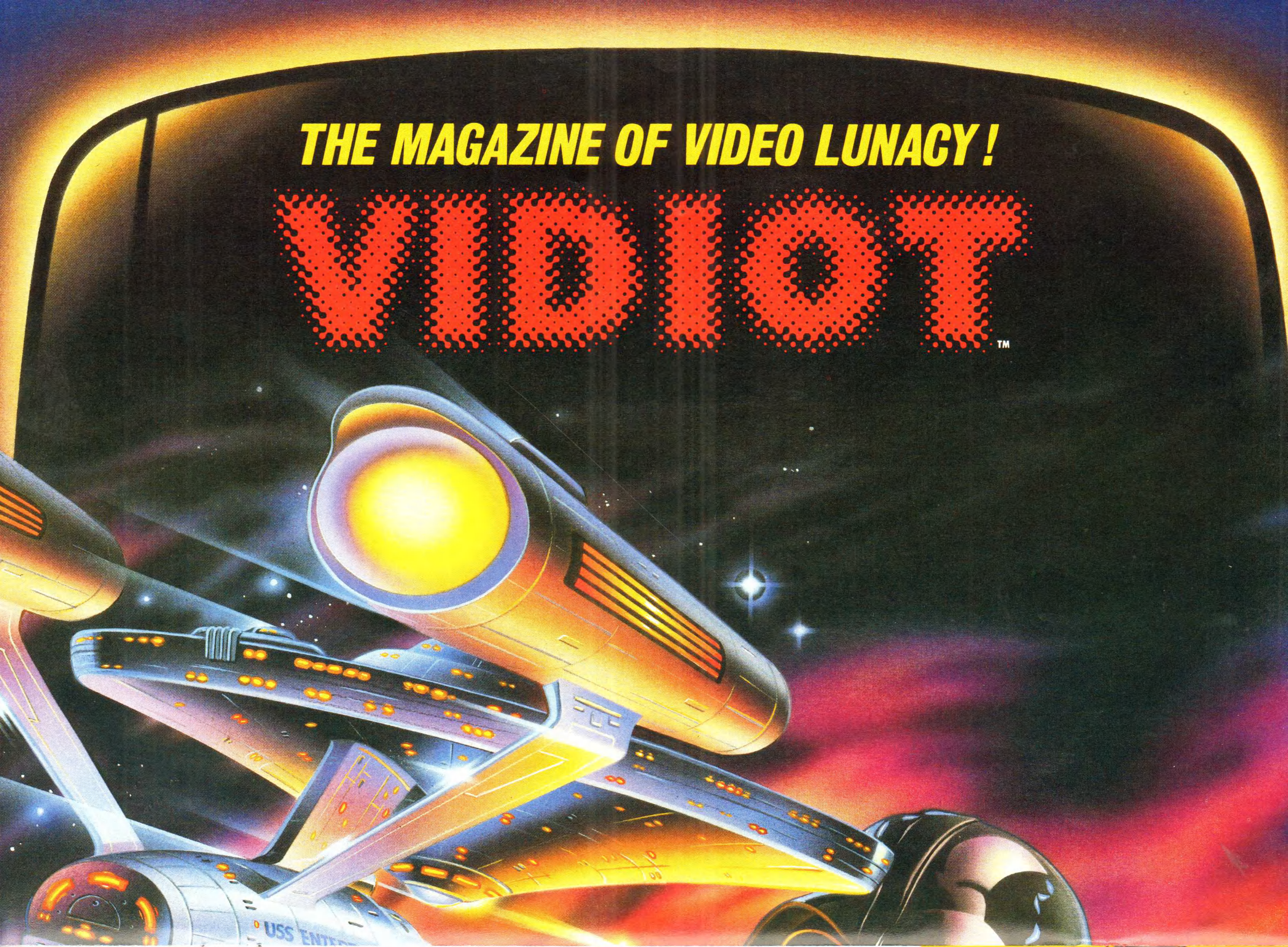
JOUST - Hither and yon, the Silver Swift and Ordinary Red Buzzard Riders boast the continuing dare to "flap up and sit on my head sometime," one of the most unusual propositions ever devised for a video game. We could go into further Freudian possibilities by exploring the way the Fire Troll reaches out and grabs close-buzzers by the tail feathers, but let's leave it lie. Probably the most fun in Joust is swooping up the green egg wave ovals, and the best way to do that before they hatch is by starting at the top. Run over the highest levels and snarf them up, letting your ostrich topple over the edge for the middle layer of floating rocks, and finally skidding across the bottom. Better not to panic or overflap, just slide it down and out. Ever try playing both players singlehandedly? It goes fast, and is ultimately impossible, but some interesting moves emerge. Get thee to a nuthouse.

JOUST
JOUST



Q*BERT - Supreme Nosers know Q*bert is both mathematical and visionary, much more than a Rubik's cube that moves. Cut. Quick. Quirky. Quazy. Queer. Sine Qua Non. Quack. I have seen top Q*Bert players commit suicide (on screen) rather than let old Coily leap upon them in the bottom corners. Be careful not to trap yourself there; on the other hand, in the higher levels, suicide may be a shrewd move (OOOOoooooooh!) because it puts the leaping nostril back at the top of the pyramid. If there's where the wrong colors lie, you might want to end it all to get to the top without smearing up your tracks. And that cool green beatnik gets to be a pretty miserable monster after level four, as his happy-go-lucky stomping takes all your best efforts back to the drawing (or should we say coloring) board. Or am I being querulous? I quit.

@!#?@!
Gottlieb
@!#?@!
Q*bert


THE MAGAZINE OF VIDEO LUNACY!
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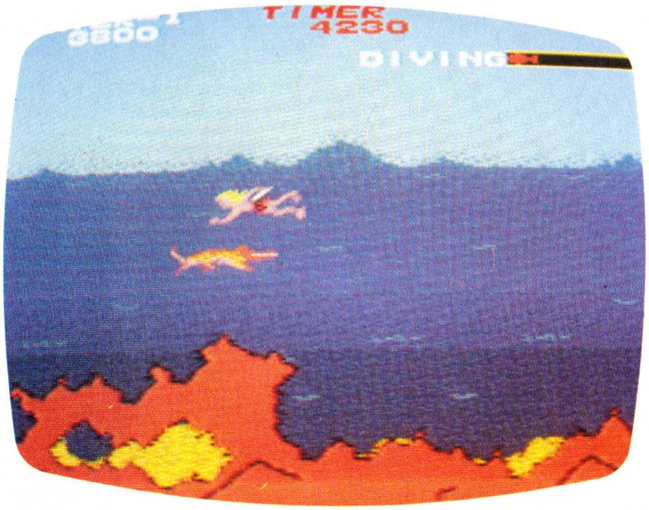
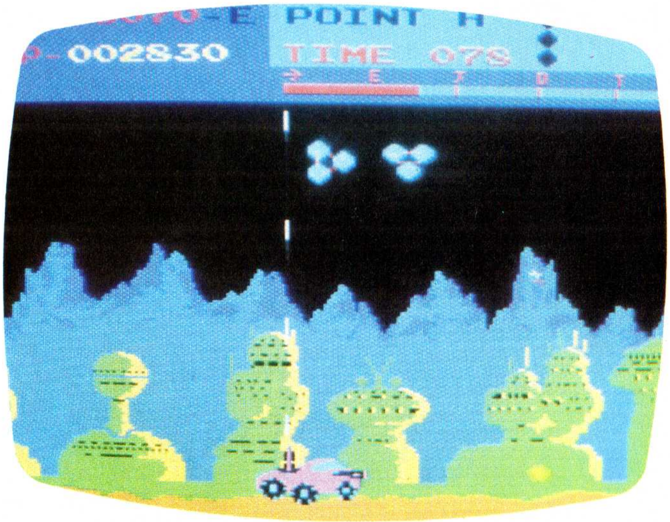

TIMER
4230
6800
DIVING

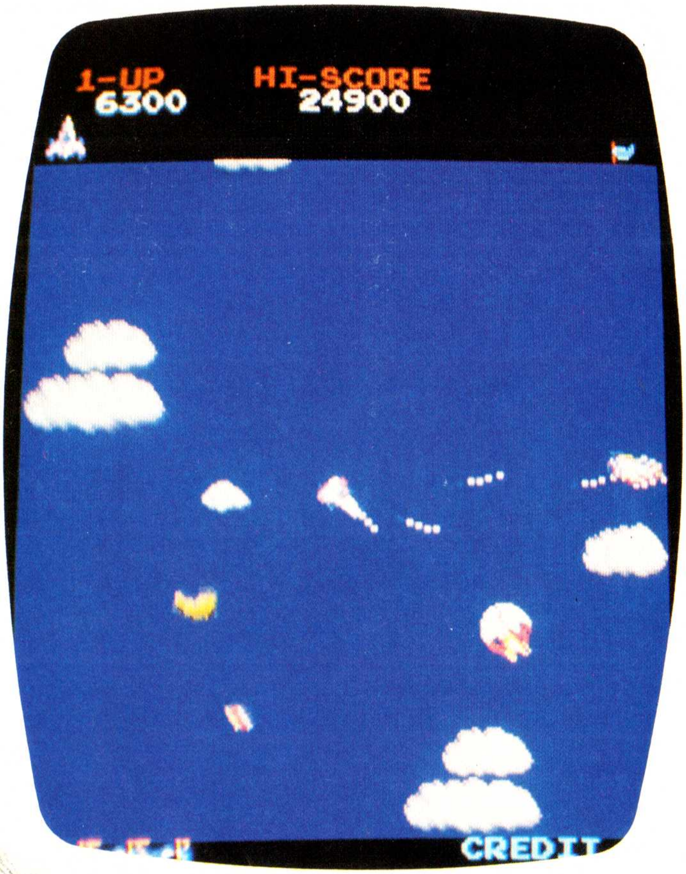
JUNGLE HUNT—Is the King slipping from sight? Even without his noble yodel, the monotonous limitations of sliding, swimming, and the chomping on organic fruits can make any jungle paradise less than it's cracked up to be. Maybe the Untarzan really wants to give up his berries and join in the cannibal feast but is too *shy*. I'm not one to wager, but if the swinger is still on the vine by next issue, I'll eat my coconut shell. Without his mating call or sexy loincloth, what's he doing in this country, anyway?

TAITO
JUNGLE HUNT
JUMP
KNIFE
JUNGLE HUNT
TAITO


POINT H
002830
TIME 078

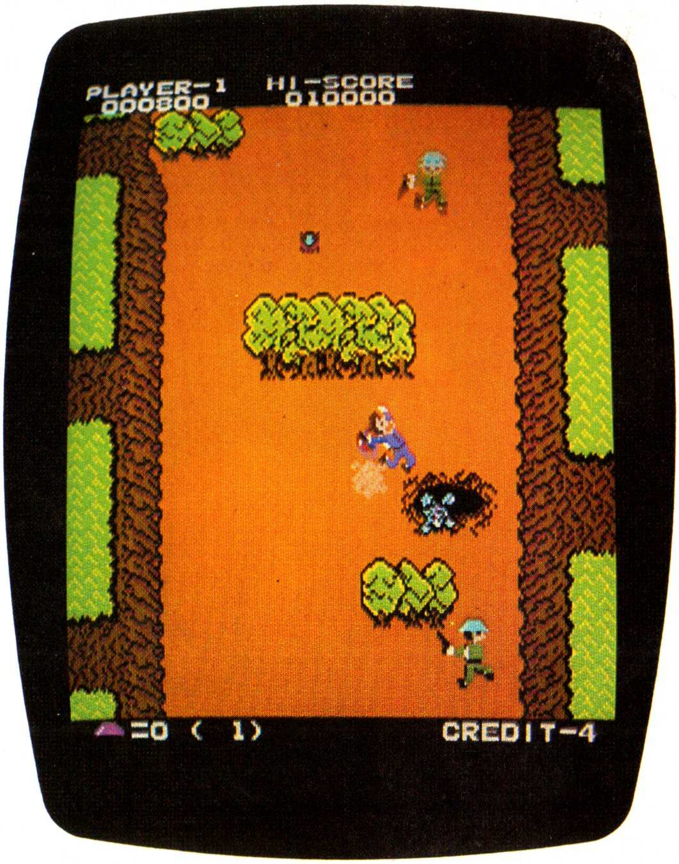
MOON PATROL—Those unprepared for the dizzying subjective viewing and driving experience of a Pole Position or Turbo might find the weightlessness and distanced side view control of Moon Patrol more down their alley. The music doesn't attack, challenge, or threaten, but dances ethnically along the journey, past the Turkish temples and the cratered landscape. Even a bad driver with plenty of cash can get a chance to reach the championship level, since a fresh quarter starts another game at the travel point where the last game ended. Look out for those shadowing fighter ships following behind you: they suddenly attack from the rear and only a well-timed jump can avoid them.

Williams
Moon Patrol
POINT
Moon
Patrol
© 1982
TODAYS
Moon patrol
HIGH SCORE
WINS
4 FREE TOKENS
report score at counter
jump
fire
slower
faster
fire
jump
Williams



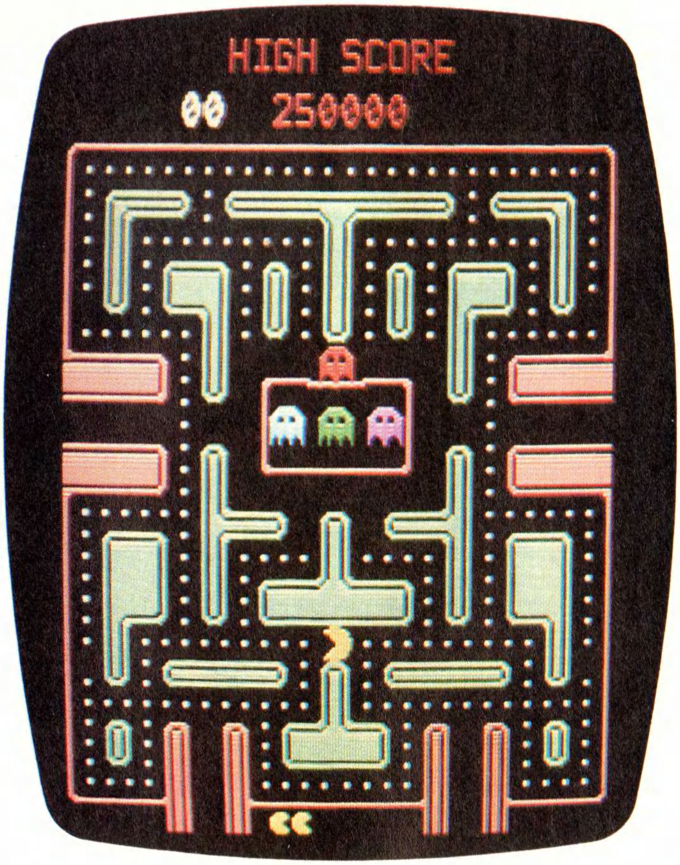
TIME PILOT—The pilot on the preview boards of Time Pilot always wins! He eliminates all aggressors swarming around him, punches out the Mother Ships, and heads on to another dimension of time and space. For the player, it's not so easy. From 1940, where prop planes buzz through the clouds, to 1970's helicopter fleet, through the jet speed of 1983, and finally within the space ships and asteroids belts of 2001, Time Pilot employs a vertigo sensation of flying upside down in a boundless sky. Your up-to-date plane makes circular loops in the sky while firing white hot bullets at the era's strongest aggressors. Actually, it's an illusion. Your plane stays dead center on the screen while the joystick controls the clouds and enemies. The background is moving, not your own ship. Try not to think about it. The only thing Time Pilot needs is a bit more speed capability (or maybe a hyperspace/jet option in the future years), which would eliminate the sluggish feeling of claustrophobia in the atmosphere. No doubt that's in line for Time Pilot II.

TimePilot
TimePilot



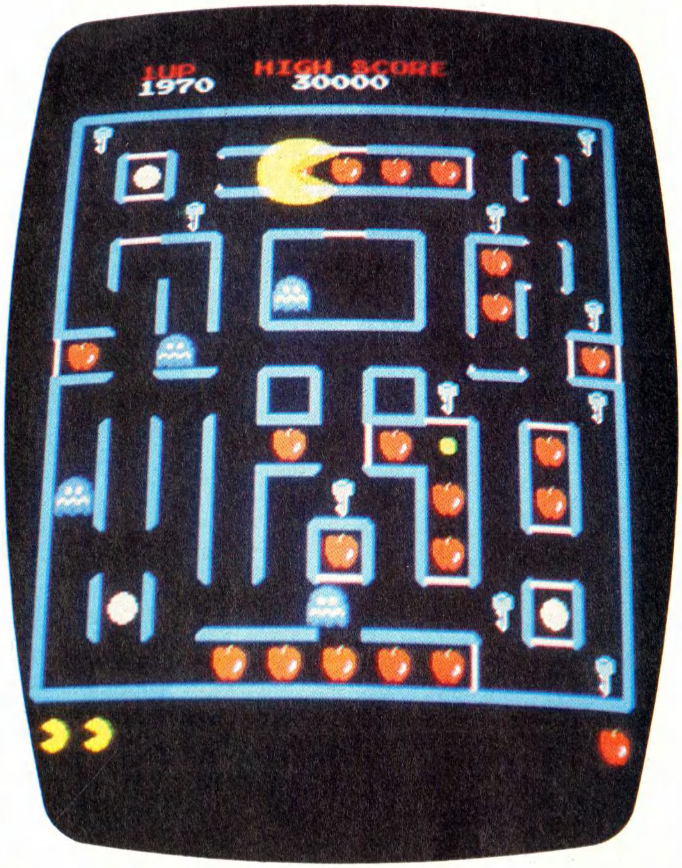
FRONT LINE—A snare drum welcomes us to battle training simulation...for future Vietnams perhaps? If you can handle the heavy clickknob aiming and firing your soldier's rat-a-tat-tatting rifle, you may advance to General. The nationalities of the enemy might be generic Asiatic, or perhaps Latin American; they are deliberately indistinct. They're just the enemy. With grenades and tanks at your disposal, you can aim and fire while maneuvering your man through the bushes and around the foxholes. Like most recruitment office promises, the first board looks deceptively like a stroll down the Champs Elysees. Soon following are some heavier mazes: mine fields on pink sand, and foxholes with brick barriers. When you reach the enemy fort and find yourself cornered by the brick wall, hold out in your tank for as long as you can, shooting as many of the enemy as possible. When you lose the tank, jump, run, and bomb the fort until you see the white flag of surrender. The body count adds up on the score, and the game can be prolonged by holding out in this way. Remember, since Uncle Sam doesn't have to worry about the budget on this battle, you have unlimited grenades, which are harder to aim but save your skin quicker than mere rifle power.

FRONT LINE
FRONT LINE



BABY PAC-MAN—Pacifier in mouth, bobbing in and out, yo-yo in hand, jerking up and down, the legimate kid usurps the oldster right off the throne. Amazing, isn't it, how the younger generation rudely bumps superstars Mr. and Ms. Pac-Man right off the list? The special genetic attributes of this offspring are that when you enter a tunnel on the tiny screen, the half-pint pinball game underneath begins to play. You've got to flipper in order to WIN energy dots onto the video board, they're not given away. Also, "you have won an extra baby" will flash on the screen if you play your balls right. Also during the pinball section: dancing fruits, a Pac-scalator, tunnel speed Pac information, etc. When you lose the ball, it's back to the maze. The ghosts aren't as easy to elude as they are in other Pac-Man games. What's next? Pac-Man Fetus?

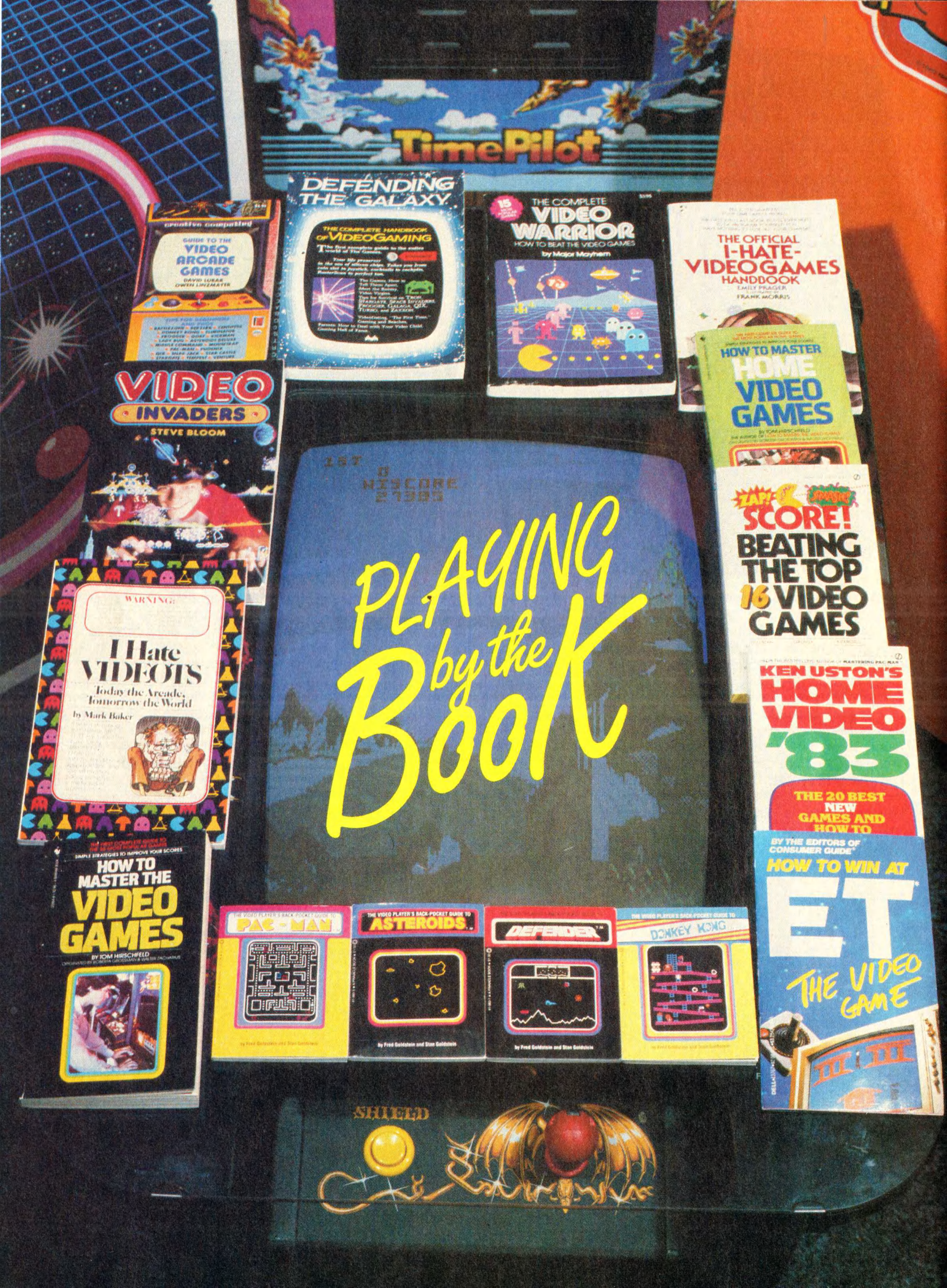
BABY
PAC-MAN
Bally
BABY
PAC-MAN



SUPER PAC-MAN—The Super Smorgasboard has 16 courses to gobble up: apples, bananas, donuts, burgers, fried eggs, ears of corn, tennis shoes, pies, turnips, artichokes, tea cups, mushrooms, bells, four leaf clovers, candies on a stick, gift-wrapped boxes, and back again to the apple by level 17. Now, most of those things can be eaten, but I can't really recommend the clover. And only die-hard Andy Warhol groupies still suck on tennies. If you get that far, you'll probably be holding on to your stomach, anyway. So what is the secret pattern, you may well ask? One seasoned player advances to level 21 by systematically running clock-wise around the edge of the board, starting at the lower right hand corner. He goes after the door opening keys first, and worries about energy dots, bonus stars, the dizzying Super Speed button, and, least of all, ghosts. Only after they appear in his laidback Super Cycle, gobbling at the speed of video light.

SUPER
PAC-MAN
Bally MIDWAY
SUPER
SUPER SPEED

PLAYING by the Book


TimePilot
creative computing
GUIDE TO THE VIDEO ARCADE GAMES
DAVID LUBAR
OWEN LINZMAYER
DEFENDING THE GALAXY
THE COMPLETE HANDBOOK OF VIDEOGAMING
THE COMPLETE VIDEO WARRIOR
HOW TO BEAT THE VIDEO GAMES
by Major Mayhem
THE OFFICIAL I-HATE-VIDEOGAMES HANDBOOK
EMILY PRAGER
FRANK MORRIS
VIDEO INVADERS
STEVE BLOOM
HOW TO MASTER HOME VIDEO GAMES
BY TOM HIRSCHFELD
ZAP! SCORE! BEATING THE TOP 16 VIDEO GAMES
WARNING:
I Hate VIDEOTS
Today the Arcade, Tomorrow the World
by Mark Baker
KEN USTON'S HOME VIDEO '83
THE 20 BEST NEW GAMES AND HOW TO
SIMPLE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE YOUR SCORES
HOW TO MASTER THE VIDEO GAMES
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ASTEROIDS
DEFENDER
DONKEY KONG
by Fred Goldstein and Stan Goldstein
BY THE EDITORS OF CONSUMER GUIDE
HOW TO WIN AT ET THE VIDEO GAME
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HI SCORE
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GUIDE TO THE VIDEO ARCADE GAMES
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BATTLEZONE • BERZERK • CENTIPEDE • DONKEY KONG • ELIMINATOR • FROGGER • GORF • KICKMAN • LADY BUG • ASTEROIDS DELUXE • MISSILE COMMAND • MOUSETRAP • PAC-MAN • PHOENIX • QIX • SNAP JACK • STAR CASTLE • STARGATE • TEMPEST • VENTURE
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E.T
THE VIDEO GAME
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THE OFFICIAL I-HATE-VIDEOGAMES HANDBOOK
EMILY PRAGER
ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK MORRIS

There seem to be more how-to books around than there used to be. This means one of two things: either there's a lot more to do nowadays, or a lot of people know a lot less about doing anything. What the hell, maybe it just means they're easy to write.

In any event, vidgames have become a big deal in the how-to genre. This, in itself, proves nothing, since publishers couldn't see money any better if it glowed in the dark. As a satellite phenomenon, it's interesting, and maybe it proves that Johnny can sound out words, but that's about it.

The only substantive question we can ask is: do these things really work? Can you actually plunk down your $2.95 and master the malignant screen? Or is the whole thing an obvious hoax? Are these just a bunch of re-written *Scarsdale Diets*? And are they available in braille?

And here's the great thing about how-to books: no one knows. I know I couldn't even learn the rules of Chutes And Ladders out of a paperback, but—then again—maybe you could build a Lunar Lander from a footnote. I suspect that most of these tomes end up on a deservedly-forgotten shelf, especially the ones that ramble with an earnestness usually reserved for stuff like Auschwitz, particle physics, and feminine hygiene. My best advice is to try to read as much of any book as you can without actually buying it before they throw you out of the store. I mean, some of these things cost a bundle of tokens.

THE VIDEO PLAYER'S BACK-POCKET GUIDE BOOKS by Fred Goldstein and Stan Goldstein (Pinnacle)**::** Here's a strange collection—the *Guide* series covers Pac-Man, Defender, Donkey Kong, Centipede, Tempest and Asteroids, each in its own 64-page format. What's cute about 'em is that they all measure 2½'' x 2½'' and cost a buck-fifty apiece. That's an alarming 24¢ per square inch. Well, I guess Fred and Stan just wanted to do a "little" writing.

The *Guides* all maintain the same lay-out...chapters are Basics of Play, Playing Know-How, Playing Strategies, and Game Scoring. This last chapter's great because it's just a chart for you to fill in your high scores, date you scored, place you scored, etc. You could use it for *more than videogames*, if you know what I mean.

Even though the authors urge you to "always keep your *Back-Pocket Guide* with you," I don't think they're washable, so keep your launderer informed. On the whole, these are actually pretty decent, even though they didn't help me "drastically improve my score the minute I hit the control panel." The whole set's not worth nine bucks, but one or two faves might be worth picking up. Like they say, "Your friends will be amazed." You don't wanna shortchange the gang, do you?

HOW TO MASTER THE VIDEO GAMES and **HOW TO MASTER HOME VIDEO GAMES** by Tom Hirschfeld (Bantam)**::** Hirschfeld's a well-known expert, but—more importantly—becomes one of the world's finest non-chemical tranquilizers when you put a pen in his hand. To describe him as dull would be a serious disservice to a talented craftsman. Adjectives that are more to the point include *disorganized*, *incomprehensible*, and *glue-and-scissors*. Seriously, these books would be more interesting if they were written in Pidgin Ukrainian.

On a purely descriptive level, the author's ostensible objective is to teach the reader winning strategies of the most popular arcade and home games. That certainly explains why he included the same chapter in each book, cleverly changing the title in case anyone's still awake at page 168. I refer to the chapter's titled "Off-Screen Exercises" and "Off-Television Exercises," respectively. It's too bad he kept the funniest part of the book at the end... Tom kicks it off by explaining "Physical adeptness is essential to implementing your strategies," describes a few hand/eye/finger aerobics, and wraps up the whole mess with a quote from the *New England Journal Of Medicine*. Stuff like this shows that Tom's a real expert, you bet.

Well, outside of reading into lines like "You can accomplish wonders by training your hands," Hirsch's books are impossible to follow, mainly because he sticks to an outline form when he goes over every game. No kidding, the kind of dippy substitute for organized thinking they force-feed English students. Zippy reading they're not, and my advice is to take 'em to a nice barbeque.

HOW TO WIN AT E.T. by The Editors Of *Consumer Guide* (Dell)**::** This one's all right. It's short (32 pages), it's in full color, it's to the point, and it's expensive ($2.50). It gives excellent advice that will not only help you score big at E.T., but will help you in day-to-day life as well (e.g., "Don't use short cuts unless absolutely necessary. Keep to a leisurely stroll. Don't run fast unless you absolutely have to." Kinda like a paperback mom.) Definitely worth it for E.T. freaks. Both of 'em.

GUIDE TO THE VIDEO ARCADE GAMES by David Lubar and Owen Linzmayer (Creative Computing)**::** Once you understand that Lubar's a writer and computer programmer whose hobbies include "sleeping late and collecting thoughts" and Linzmayer's "temporarily doing time as a high school student,'' you know you've met some qualified authors.

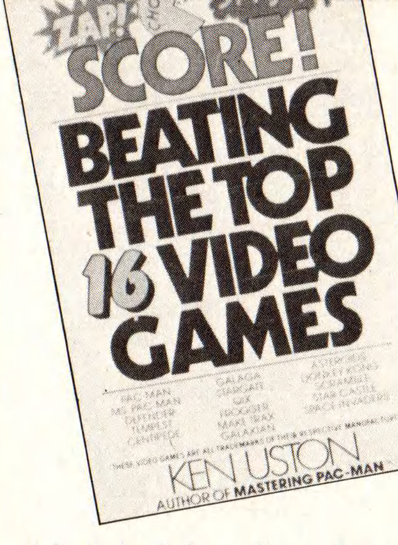
The *Guide* covers the usual twenty biggies and is written in a bland, congenial style that doesn't make you feel your immortal soul's in danger if you don't follow the author's notions. The graphics are simple enough to understand, which is something of a rarity in the genre. Possibly a bit over-priced ($3.95), it's probably one of the best books around for beginners.

THE OFFICIAL I-HATE-VIDEO-GAMES HANDBOOK by Emily Prager (Pocket Books)**::** A light-hearted jab at the vid world, the *Handbook* features games like Punk-Man (object: ''To trash the record producer's office''), Anorexian (''the diet game''), and the much-needed Tits And Asteroids (where the dangers include teenage pregnancy and shotgun weddings). Includes tongue-in-cheek histories and descriptions of video side-effects that could've been lifted from *Mad* magazine. At times a bit ponderous, the *Handbook* is best regarded as a cheap last-minute gift item.

VIDEO INVADERS by Steve Bloom (Arco)**::** This is a really fine discussion of the whole phenomenon of vidgames and not strictly a how-to book. As far as I know, it's the only definitive history around. Bloom went right to the inventors and manufacturers to gather a lot of inside dope that's simply unavailable elsewhere. For example, Wizard of Wor was banned in Germany because it's a shooting game. Eugene Jarvis, the craftsman behind Defender, describes his brainchild as ''a game for punks.''Tim Skelly, the inventor of Star Castle, Star Hawk, and Rip-Off, says that ''Anxiety and agression are the two keys to designing games.''

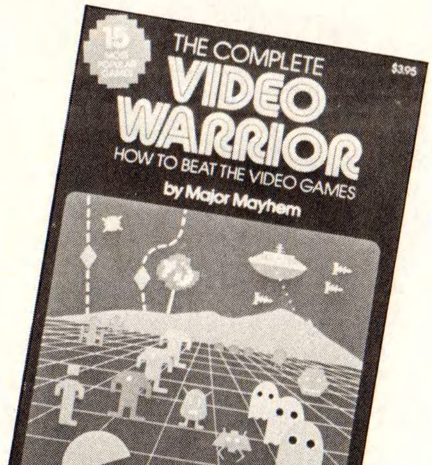
A good chapter on the future trends in gamedom and a very readable history/ strategy/general commentary on various games wraps up *Invaders*. This is a real book (I know because it's even got a bibliography) and one of the top two you should have on your shelf if you're into vidgames at all.

SCORE! BEATING THE TOP 16 VIDEO GAMES and **KEN USTON'S HOME VIDEO '83** by Ken Uston (Signet)**::** Ken Uston—self-described as ''master of Vegas casinos and video arcades alike!''—is sort-of a prime rival of Tom Hirschfeld in the realm of expertdom. Whereas Hirschfeld is plodding, though, Uston is bold and innovative:this guy actually rates *303* games for hand-eye coordination, game versatility and mental challenge. Plus he comes right out and tells you how to cheat to win! (Regarding Cosmic Avenger, he says: ''If you're really competitive—and sneaky—don't tell your opponent you're holding the bomb button down continuously, or even that you're taping it down, if you can get away with it.'' Hey, take me to the Vegas casinos, Ken!)


ZAP!
SCORE!
BEATING THE TOP 16 VIDEO GAMES
PAC-MAN
MS. PAC-MAN
DEFENDER
TEMPEST
CENTIPEDE
GALAGA
STARGATE
QIX
FROGGER
MAKE TRAX
GALAXIAN
ASTEROIDS
DONKEY KONG
SCRAMBLE
STAR CASTLE
SPACE INVADERS
KEN USTON
AUTHOR OF MASTERING PAC-MAN

Of the two books, *Home Video* is probably the best, but both are jammed with charts, graphics, and tables enough to please any student. Written for players of all skill-levels (which all these books claim to be, naturally), these are especially good for the middlin'-to-near-expert. And Uston's no chump, believe me. At one point he says, ''It will be tempting for many of you to ignore this advice.'' Not me, Kenny, just hand me the tape.

I HATE VIDEOTS by Mark Baker (Fireside)**::** Cut from the same cloth as *I-Hate-Video-Games*, Baker shows a little more class by being a lot more vicious. His naming famous addicts of famous games (General Curtis LeMay hooked on Missile Command, Jonathan Livingston Seagull a Donkey Kong freak, and Aldous Huxley, Timothy Leary, Tony Orlando and The Grateful Dead all into Tempest) is at least the right idea. So are some of his, uh, blanket dismissals of every game of note. Space Invaders is ''smug and simpleminded and so are the stupid videots who play it.'' Defender fans are ''know-it-alls who could screw up anything with their grandstanding and then have the gall to blame it on you.'' A Berzerk player ''will never stand his ground and fight like a robot, much less like a man. He's disgusting.''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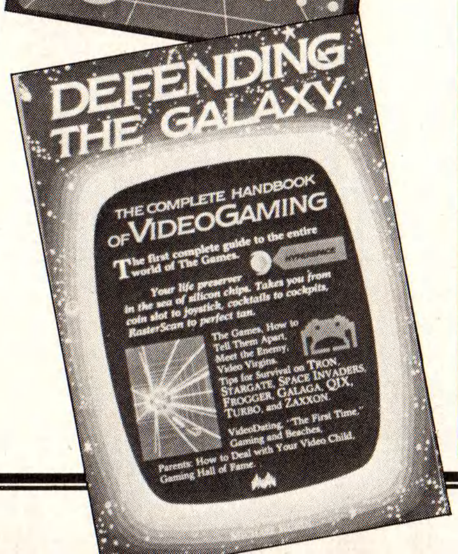
VIDEO WARRIOR
HOW TO BEAT THE VIDEO GAMES
by Major Mayhem
$3.95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VideoDating, "The First Time," Gaming and Beaches.
Parents: How to Deal with Your Video Child. Gaming Hall of Fame.

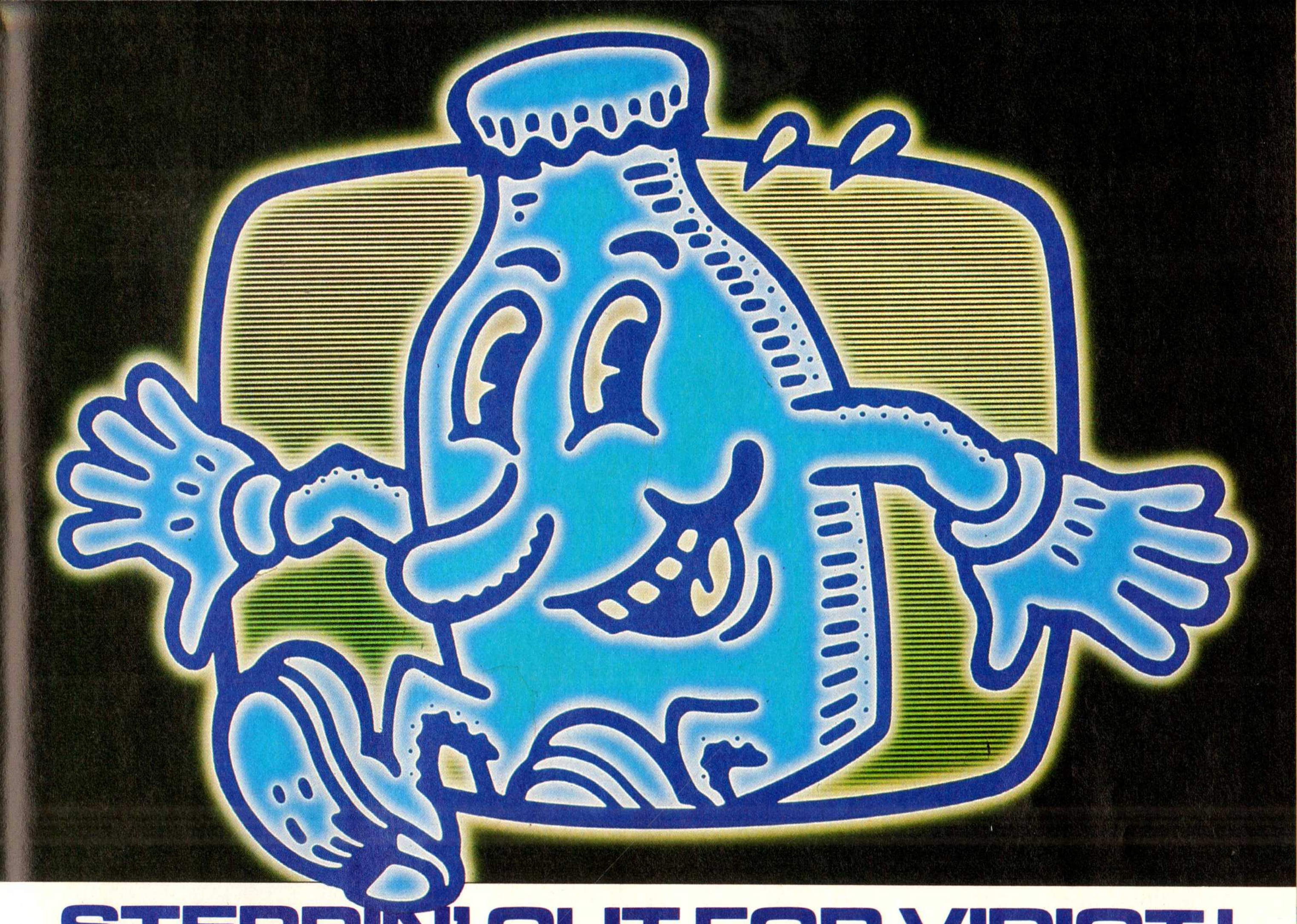
Some healthy semi-smut and inspiring ways of treating the ''terminal videot at home until his ultimate demise'' make this a helluva funny book. Howcum you misspelled ''Vidiot,'' though, Mark?

THE COMPLETE VIDEO WARRIOR by Major Mayhem (Golden Press)**::** A straight-ahead advice book by the anonymous ace video warrior, this is especially strong on simple, colorful graphics and no-nonsense strategy. (''OK, the aliens are in place. Move your ship to either edge of the convoy and knock out two or three rows of aliens.'' Yes, *sir*!) A little preachy, but good.

DEFENDING THE GALAXY, edited by Michael Rubin (Triad)**::** The penultimate in vid-books, this one's got it all: it's readable, it's funny, it's informative, and it's got a sensational layout. Acting on the premise that ''Living right and dying well are what video games are all about,'' *Galaxy* includes chapters like ''The Unwritten Rules of Video Games... Written'' (''Only game if you are reasonably clean,'' ''Do not lie about your gaming abilities—exaggerate,'' ''Do not take gaming too seriously''), ''Jamming In—The Fine Art of Being 'Next','' and ''Other Sports—Alternatives For Well-Roundedness'' (biking, frisbee, and surfing, ''a silly sport.'')

Even though *Galaxy* is chock-full of understated humor, it's also chock-full of truly useful information, like a directory of 122 games, an excellent ''required reading'' list (where we disagree 100% on the relative merits of Hirschfeld and Uston), and record high scores ''as of September 3, 1982 at 11 p.m.'' on the world's most popular arcade games. *Plus* a state-by-state run-down on where the best arcades can be found.

There is absolutely no way to not enjoy this book, even if you've never played anything more hi-tech than tic-tac-toe. In case you have trouble locating a copy, it's available from the Triad Publishing Company, Inc., P.O. Box 13096, Gainesville, FL 32604 for $4.95. It's worth twice as much. ■



STEPPIN' OUT FOR VIDIOT™!

Hey! Look who's steppin' out of the tube! It's Boy Howdy, the lovable mascot of VIDIOT's sister magazine, CREEM. Boy's steppin' out to find out what you—the reader—think of VIDIOT! Is there something you'd especially like to see in the magazine? Something you enjoyed or didn't enjoy? Something we left out? Let us know by filling in the survey below! Keep VIDIOT *your* magazine by filling out the questions and mailing today!!!

---

1. How often do you go to video arcades?
   - ☐More than once a day
   - ☐Once a day
   - ☐3 times a week
   - ☐Twice a week
   - ☐Once a week
   - ☐Once every 2 weeks
   - ☐Once a month
   - ☐Less than once a month
   - ☐Never
2. Do you play at more than one arcade?
   ☐Yes ☐No
3. How long do you spend at one arcade, on the average, each time you go?
   - ☐More than 4 hours
   - ☐3-4 hours
   - ☐2-3 hours
   - ☐1-2 hours
   - ☐½ to 1 hour
   - ☐less than ½ hour
   - ☐Don't go
4. On the average how much money do you spend a week on videogames?

5. How many different videogames do you usually play each time you go to an arcade?
   - ☐1 only
   - ☐1 or 2
   - ☐3 or 4
   - ☐5 or 6
   - ☐7 or more
6. What is your favorite videogame?

7. What do you especially like about them? (Check as many as apply)
   - ☐Killing aliens
   - ☐Cute video characters
   - ☐Team sport similarity
   - ☐Adventure story format
   - ☐Calculating strategies
   - ☐Electronic sounds
   - ☐Outer space simulation
8. How do you find out about new videogames? (Check as many as apply)
   - ☐Newspaper ads or reviews
   - ☐Magazine ads or reviews
   - ☐Hearing about them from friends
   - ☐Seeing them in an arcade
9. Do you have a Home Videogame system?
   ☐Yes ☐No
10. Do you own☐ or plan to own☐ (Check if applicable) one of the following systems:
    - ☐Atari VCS
    - ☐ColecoVision
    - ☐Other
    - ☐Mattel Intellivision
    - ☐Atari 5200
11. Do you have MTV cabled into your home?
    ☐Yes ☐No

Enclose in envelope and mail to: VIDIOT Readers Survey, P.O. Box P-1064, Birmingham, MI 48012

NAME AGE

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE ZIP

12. If not, do you want it? ☐Yes ☐No
13. Is rock music played at your arcade?
    ☐Yes ☐No
14. In order to play videogames, do you spend less of your entertainment dollars on other items/events? ☐Yes ☐No
15. If yes, please indicate those items/events which receive less of your dollars (mark a, b, c, in order of those receiving less of your $$)
    - ☐Records/pre-recorded tapes
    - ☐Magazines
    - ☐Concerts
    - ☐Movies
    - ☐Sport Events
16. Do you have either of the following items in your household? (Check if applicable)
    - ☐Video cassette recorder
    - ☐Video cassette player
17. What was your favorite feature in this issue of VIDIOT?

18. What was your least favorite feature?

19. If you have a home computer, what model is it?

20. Why haven't you bought a home computer?

21. What would you like to see in future issues of VIDIOT?

Computer Graphics by Rob Markovitz

I Call on the Godfather: Reliving History With Dick Clark

By Toby Goldstein

When I was 12, I had a fantasy. No, we're not talking about the "grow up and become an actress" dream, or the "gee, I wish I lived in a big house and had my own room instead of this cramped apartment" entreaty. Not even some vague reward-thoughts about an extra dollar in the allowance if I brought home all A's—which, at least, usually happened. That meant I could rush out and buy two new 45s, which in 1961 cost 49 cents apiece.

This earnest prayer took the form of communication with the black and white console television that sat, monolithic, in our living room. Every school day, at 3:30 p.m., the set would glow into life on the New York City ABC affiliate, Channel 7, and music familiar as the national anthem (and far more beloved) ricocheted off the apartment walls. Watching the clear-voiced, smooth-faced announcer welcome his lindying regulars, then greet "his kids," millions of other young people, I yearned, "Oh, if only I were 13, I could go to Philadelphia—the next best thing to the Emerald City—and dance on *American Bandstand*."

My friends and I wore out the rug practicing those steps which would endear us to Kenny, Arlene, Barbara, and all the other impossibly hip members of this enviable clique. And when we weren't ogling a particularly dishy sweater set or flip hairdo, we saw the performers. There were our heroes, from the show's Italian neighborhood—Frankie Avalon or Bobby Rydell. Maybe the great black singers, such as Jackie Wilson and the early Miracles. Girl groups, like the Chantels and Marvelettes. This was the music that commanded the unfathomable loyalties of a lonely, too-brainy kid who needed to belong someplace. (I would later discover that there were millions of us all thinking the same thing.) Smiling through the music's roar, gently but firmly controlling his on-air sock hop so that no two camera-hungry couples would punch each other out, at least while the show was being broadcast—was a 32-year-old disc jockey named Dick Clark.

Survivor of the payola scandals which had almost destroyed the burgeoning rock industry (and did ultimately ruin *the* formative rock deejay, Alan Freed), Clark was the closest thing to a teenager's benevolent deity. His pleasant features and manner acceptable to all but the most ogre-ish parents, Dick Clark quietly, unobtrusively and steadily shaped the developing rock culture. The way his dancers dressed was immediately copied in high and junior high schools. The songs he aired on the show invariably became smash hits. The faces who sang those numbers were white, brown and black—frequently the only times teenagers in many parts of America even imagined relating to a differently-hued individual.

"One of the biggest mistakes I ever made was being unimpressed with the Beatles."

Before that decade would end, events in the real world would affect young people far more than the simple entertainment vehicle called *American Bandstand*. Philadelphia would give way to the golden configurations of Hollywood for the show's home base. While "chosen ones" still danced on *Bandstand*, their clothes influenced each other more than they did the coast-to-coast school set. A daily event became relegated to midday Saturday viewing—and these days young students race

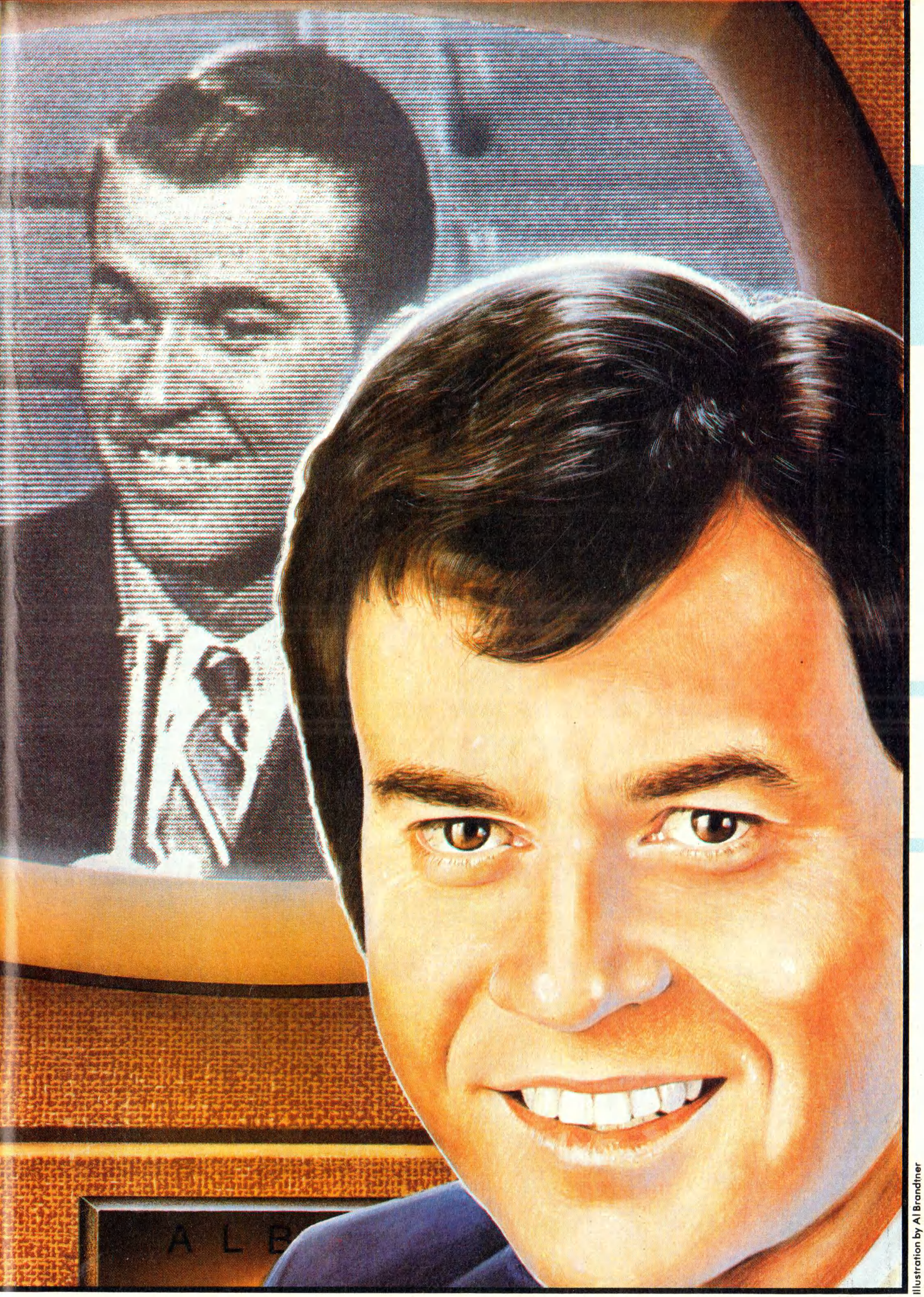


Illustration by Al Brandtner

Dick hushes hinters in crowd as unfortunate victim squirms: "Well...uh, Dick...my, uh... my name is...uh..."

home to watch soaps or play Pac-Man.

However, during the past few years, we have slowly become aware that we ought to be watching *American Bandstand* again, even if Barry Manilow (ugh) sings its theme song. While tightly formatted radio programmers of AOR stations were avoiding punk, new-wave and funk music as if they carried loathsome diseases, *Bandstand* was booking 'em, in technicolor. Prince, Joe Jackson, the Stray Cats, Blondie, the Go-Go's, ABC, Rick James, even PiL, finally had one important place in which to foment musical subversion. I don't know what seeing these acts means to a generation (you folks) who've been censored in your radio listening for years, but for me, Dick Clark is coming damn close to earning deity stature again.

Strange, but the awesomely youthful 53-year-old man who meets me in his midtown publicists' office doesn't act like a living legend. Dick Clark warmly extends his hand in greeting, groans in fun when I tell him about that old consuming desire to get to Philadelphia—"everybody's got a story," he says, and tries to wake up following his "red-eye" through flight from L.A. Dressed in a casual, but well-cut sport jacket, knit tie, conservative shirt and slacks, Clark looked as if he might have just stepped off the ABC set. Sure, the face that some jokingly say made a pact with the devil for eternal youth is starting to flesh out here, or droop a bit there. It's still ludicrous to think of this man as middle-aged, especially since he refuses to let the calendar govern his life.

"I have a favorite story," he easily recalls, settling into a comfortable chair. "I was doing one of those rock 'n' roll concerts and was backstage with a young man. It was November, and I was celebrating my 30th birthday, and this kid was about 18. He says, 'Today's your birthday? You look pretty good for a guy your age!' I thought that was pretty funny then. Now I'm 53, this fellow's lost all his hair, he's got three or four kids, and he doesn't look so good for *his* age!

"It is totally unimportant what you look like. It's what's inside you that really makes it count. Your mother and father told you that, your teachers. Unfortunately, you never really grasp it 'til you get older and say, 'Gee, I better not turn into a prune mentally.' A lot of people do."

"Gee, I better not turn into a prune mentally."

***"Chances are I wear a silly grin,"* Johnny Mathis croons to Dick on the only time in history Dick *wasn't* wearing one.**

Maybe Dick Clark just doesn't have time to age. For a man who's so successful he could retire whenever he wishes, Clark works as hard as the proverbial boy in the William Morris Agency mailroom who needs to become a big shot. He describes his most recent work week as "10 shows on Saturday and Sunday, a State Fair yesterday (it's now Tuesday), the *Bloopers* show the day before. And we're shooting a movie in Rhode Island." Not to mention that Clark is in New York to promote the Broadway musical *Rock and Roll; The First 5,000 Years*, a pet project of his, in which he invested some $200,000. As one of the producers, Clark helped select the 60-odd songs which try to define rock's most significant moments.

Filled with optimism as we spoke, Clark had no idea that the show would close soon after its gala premiere week, and a hit musical would not yet be added to Clark's comprehensive achievement list. Not to worry—there's still the annual *New Year's Rockin' Eve* (which Clark hosts from Times Square, only a few blocks away from the room in which we chatted), the game shows, the TV specials, the possible major motion picture, and of course, *Bandstand*, still number one on Clark's hit parade.

In what soon becomes apparent as a pattern, Dick Clark has a personal anecdote to accompany the explanation of his long-running commitment to the show. Everywhere this man must go, nosy reporters, fellow industry giants and just plain folks want to know the motivations behind each step Clark takes. Whatever Dick Clark may be like after the cameras have stopped rolling, he was extremely gracious when answering, for what must be the umpty-ninth time, the basic *Bandstand* queries.

"I don't know how to put this," he candidly admits in a brief lapse from smooth-flowing composure. "If I wasn't interested in rock 'n' roll, I wouldn't be doing this. The making of money is very important to me. I always use that for a yardstick. I'm never ashamed of making money. But it's not the driving force that gets me involved. I like the stimulation of things that are new and interesting, all those nice little esoteric things.

"Somebody said to me the other day, 'Why on earth do you still do *Bandstand*? Aren't you tired of it?' I said, no, I like it, it's very simple. I'm devoted to it. I love it. I'll do it as long as they let me.

"Nothing I ever did in my life won any awards, but it did make a lot of money. That meant somebody out there liked it.

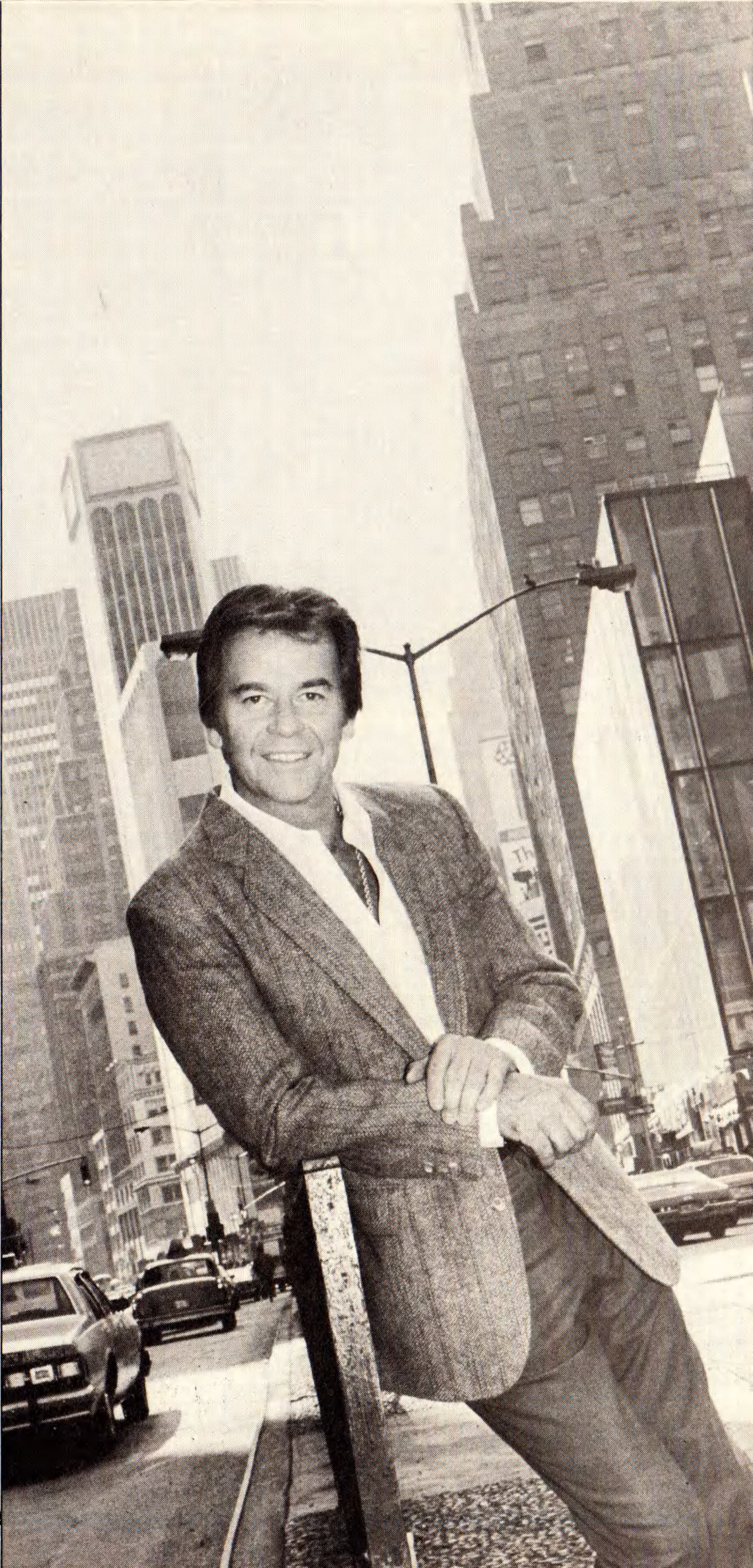
The *Bandstand* was an incredible experience to learn how to get a thick hide, 'cause it was universally condemned. There wasn't anybody your age in the business who was writing. They were all the geriatric set, and they hated every minute of it. To see that succeed, despite them, is one of those few wonderful, gratifying things that happens in your life and you say 'nyah, nyah.' " (Just like the Waitresses.)

The story of how an appealing local show host turned his teenage dance parties into a 30-years-long national phenomenon, is fascinating—a creative success story within an industry filled with failure and mediocrity. Clark discusses the birth and growth of *American Bandstand* fully in his autobiography, *Rock, Roll and Remember* (co-written with VIDIOT's own Richard Robinson). Available in paperback, it's recommended reading for those who want a lot more of Dick Clark than the hour he was able to give me. Whether in reading the book, watching *Bandstand* even now, or listening to Clark's remembrances, one well known facet of his progressivism stands out: Against staggering odds, Dick Clark institutionalized the ideal of rock 'n' roll as a music for all young people. In the mid-1950's, you could easily land in the hospital, or worse, for cultivating such thoughts.

Says Clark, "There's a poster in my office that I cherish. In those days, when we did the rock 'n' roll shows, we used to drag along in buses. And 60-70 percent of the people on the bus were black. And the poster says, 'Don't buy Negro records.' The rest of it was just this extraordinary copy. And right above that, I have a photo of a man backstage with a Confederate cap on, and on the stage is a black man who is singing. Now, that was the very first integrated black and white television show, done live in the city of Atlanta, Georgia. Under the threat of serious problems, we did that show. And the man on the stage was the late Sam Cooke. So I have the photo of Sam, to remind me that things change a hell of a lot in 20 years.

"People will say—the *Bandstand* doesn't have any sociologically redeeming values. Bullshit! It's become part of Americana." According to Clark, who is an amateur historian as a hobby, his office vaults are overflowing with so many tapes, films, photographs and personal documents that any sociologist would be forced to name Dick Clark an official archivist of a genuine contemporary culture.

Although Clark's Broadway rock venture was not successful, its message is certainly applicable to any of rock's several generations—that, as he says,



Ebet Roberts

Haw, haw! You mean *you* didn't know these shows are all reruns from 1966?

"the big wheel keeps on turning." Music which Presley fans shook to has the power, in a bit different form, to shake up those who follow the Stray Cats. And if there is a sin in being a rock 'n' roll fan, it's to condemn some new style whole-hog, without attempting to find even one worthwhile example of the form.

"One of the biggest mistakes I ever made," confesses Clark, "was being unimpressed with the Beatles. 'Cause I heard it all before! It was Chuck Berry and Little Richard, Buddy Holly and the Everly Brothers packaged with a slightly strange Liverpudlian accent. So what else is new? And, they had long hair. And I missed that, because that's what happens when you become old and jaded. But kids are like that today. They have built-in prejudices.

"That's one difference from the early days. We were too naive to be prejudiced. On the same record spindle, they'd put Little Richard and The Penguins, Pat Boone, Kay Starr, and the Ray Anthony Orchestra doing the 'Bunny Hop' and Fats Domino. It slowly evolved into little areas of snob taste, depending on your age, your gender, your sexual preference, your geographical locations. Any older person will tell a younger one —sample a lot of stuff, enjoy as much as you can before you can't stop the process of becoming prejudiced. People my age long for the big band days to come back! But that's sad, if you hold on to it and say, 'These were the best days of my life.' The best days of your life ought to be right now."

Perhaps because he has always considered openness more important than *his* personal taste regarding *Bandstand*'s guests, Clark is able to successfully place a songwriter like Burt Bacharach and a wild funkmeister such as Rick James on the same show. After so many years, new sounds and styles are expected from him.

I might've been stunned when John Lydon careened all over the set, driving the cameramen crazy, while a Public Image Ltd. tune played in the background, but to Clark's avuncular eye, it was just "poor John. Y'see, he was very ill that day. He had the flu. So he said, I'm going to be rather bizarre, I can't lip-synch, so I'm just gonna go crazy. That wasn't the first time," Clark says amusedly. "You have to relate that to the first time I saw Little Richard—a black man with white silver-sprayed hair, and a gold lamé suit."

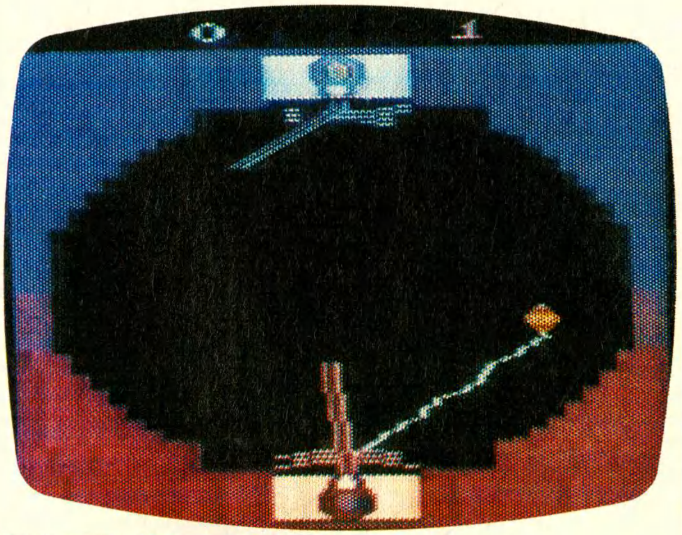
What impresses me most about Dick Clark is that his unflappable nature offers enough room to welcome artists whose very existence poses a threat to his fellow so-called media magnates. At one time, during the late '60s drug-oriented era, Clark retreated from the scene, frankly admitting that the acid days were incomprehensible to him. On the other hand, Clark will book any type of artist on *Bandstand*, as long as they understand that an "act" is meant for the stage. Performers who get their jollies by making anyone else uncomfortable (Ozzy, take note) do not and will not find a place before the 8 to 12 million steady *American Bandstand* viewers.

"The only thing that bends me out of shape is, after an artist appears on television, they mistreat the staff, tear up the dressing room, urinate on the walls, or do any of those outrageous things. Then, I don't really want to have a lot to do with them. I don't give a damn how you make your living, but don't carry the act off the stage. It's really not mature."

"I'll do *Bandstand* as long as they let me."

Without doubt one of America's most recognizable gentlemen, Dick Clark wears a cautious smile as he poses for pictures in the midst of the Times Square sleaziness. Several people acknowledge him. One man hands Clark a religious tract. He takes the paper, and keeps on smiling. A few weeks later, I read about a dinner given for Dick Clark in Washington. Several guests thought the fête was for a former senator of the same name, and abruptly cancelled out of the party. Quoted in the New York *Times*, the *Bandstand* host claimed he had a perfect right to use his own name. As in so many other cases, Dick Clark was the first one there. The *Times*, in closing the item, commented simply, "When the political Dick Clark successfully ran for the Senate in 1972, the entertainment Dick Clark had been host of the network program, *American Bandstand* for 15 years." I rest my case. ■

WHAT'S NEW IN VIDEO



CARTS

JEDI ARENA
Parker Bros.
(Atari)

Sorry, *Star Wars* freaks. Looks like you've got another less-than-thrilling videogame to play with.

Jedi Arena is an uncomplicated, straightforward match. It works best for two players but can be tackled man-vs.-machine as well. It's designed for paddles instead of joysticks, which means finer handling and tired paws.

The screen shows the Arena as seen from above, not unlike Activision's Boxing. At the top and bottom of the playfield are the two Jedi Knights ("Big" Red and "Mr." Blue), each with their own protective force field and lightsaber. In the center ring hovers the Seeker, that Sputnik-like metal balloon you'll remember Luke taking saber practice against in the film.

The Seeker is always buzzing around like a grapefruit with smarts. Your mission (should you decide to accept it) is to fire a laser bolt through it at your opponent. The angle of the blast is determined by turning the paddle in the desired direction and smacking the fire button. You want to pick apart the other guy's force field a "brick" at a time, *ala* Breakout. When a shot makes it through a hole in the shield, you've won the match.

In later rounds, you'll encounter the Wild Seeker and the Invisible Seeker. What is this, '50s B-movie week? No such luck. The Wild One buzzes around out of control, blasting both opponents. The invisible jobby is just what its name implies: invisible. Watch me as I snore.

Overall, this J-Man found the action somewhat lacking on the challenge and variety scales. Two-player games come off fairly well, if you've got an extra person sitting around. But, as often happens in player-vs.-computer bouts the computer lacks that killer instinct, making for rather putt-putt contests.

One after another, these pre-sold titles are turning out to be duds, both commercially and fun-wise. Hate to say it, but it looks like it might just be time to go back to plain old *imagination* again, vid fans.

Steve Kenyon

TURBO
Coleco
(ColecoVision)

Turbo is yet another feather in Coleco's cap, a superb game that revises the home videogame concept with the much noted Expansion Module #2 *and* is great fun to boot.

I'm amazed the game works so well. Like Sega's great arcade game, Turbo puts you in the driving seat of a race car. The screen shows your car in the foreground and, throughout the never-ending road race, it's up to you to avoid oil slicks, oncoming cars, ambulances and some generally hairy turns. In the arcades it's been such a winner it inspired Pole Position; let's see Atari do as well bringing *that* arcade game to the homes.

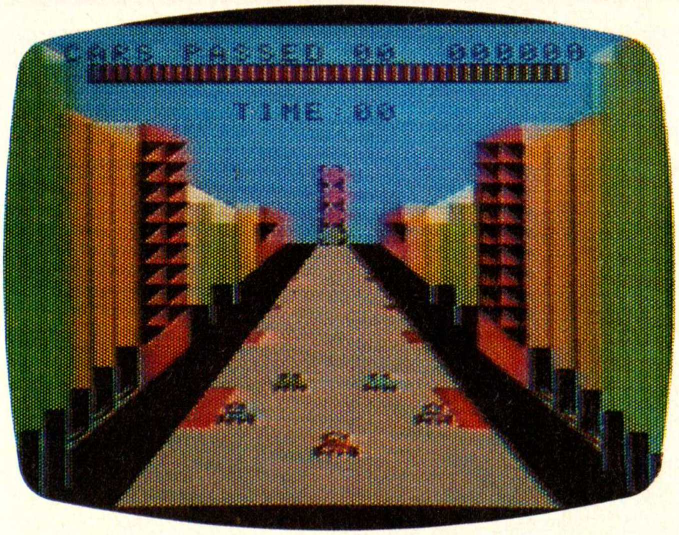
First: the Expansion Module. The steering wheel is hip indeed—though the wheel-play is a *little* less precise than the arcader's maybe due to its smaller size. It's very easy to get used to. The suction cups on the wheel-unit's underside work fine; the wheel won't slip around as you play. And the idea of using your joystick as your gearshift is A-1.

The accelerator pedal is fine, and certainly functional, but I found from the first game on that it really wasn't *that* difficult to drive well with the pedal floored. Only after some practice—and a few crashes on some of the trickier turns—is it apparent that the pedal and the gearshift are very much dependent on each other, and work together very nicely, just like on a real car. Cool.

One complaint: Batteries. You need them for the Expansion Module, though a Coleco adapter is available. You'll find *that* out after you've brought home the game. Oh well. I recommend the adapter.

The view: if you've played the arcade version you know, but if you haven't, you'll be astounded. The scenery is ace: it looks like you're driving in France (or Miami Beach, for that matter), and the colors—

Screen photos by Larry Kaplan

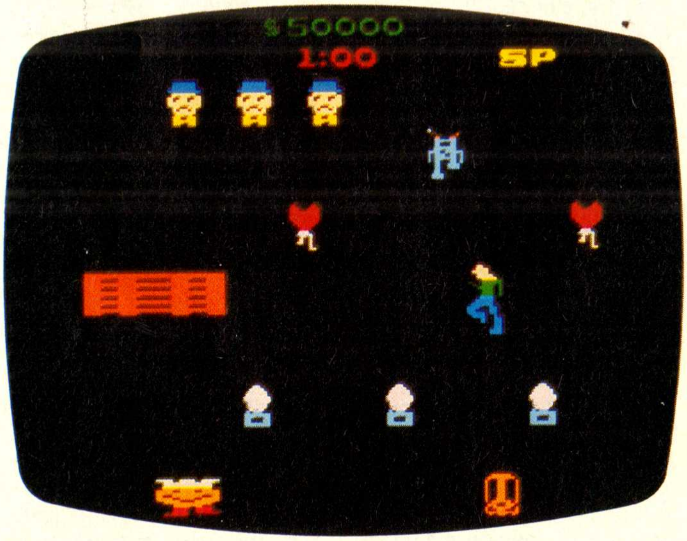


particularly the orange sunset—are phenomenal. Beautiful. The snow driving? Just like for real.

Otherwise, no complaints whatsoever with this game. Only practical one might be that 60 bucks a shot is pretty steep, since you can only play one game. But that's for now. There are plenty more driving games to be made and, as Turbo clearly shows, the folks at Coleco are no dummies. The Expansion Module concept *alone* shows they know where vidgames are going.

Me? I'm waiting for Expansion Module Number *Ten*.

Kevin Christopher

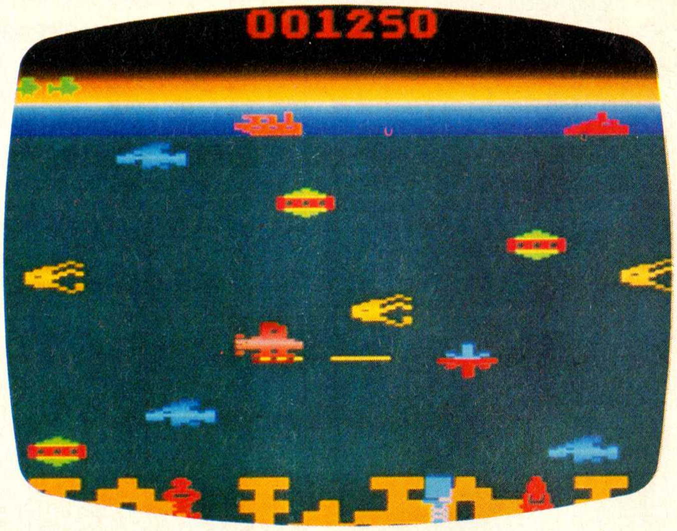


JOURNEY ESCAPE
BERMUDA TRIANGLE
Data Age
(Atari VCS)

Data Age runs full circle with their two new carts. Hi-tech hijinx achieves a new high in reverting to children's game standards to underscore its good times.

Journey Escape, Steve Perry's haircut notwithstanding, is just a nice combination of "Tag" and "Hide 'n' Seek." There's no slap to the beak or a horde of kids peeking underneath a porch, of course. But hazards are plenty. Mini-skirted "love-crazed" girls chase the band members like someone's pants are demanding self-determination. This many groping groupies would give chopped liver chapped lips. Plus, rock photographers pop in and out, sleazy promoters lunge for your loot, and stage barriers dare you to take a giant step for band-kind.

On the screen's open maze, moving amongst all these menacing obstacles (who come in cuddly *and* chubby sizes), you goal is to make the group's escape vehicle (the gilded beetle from Journey's LP covers) in 60 seconds without forfeiting your fee. The opponents take your time as well as your money, delaying your progress with various snapshots, stumbles or outright honks.



One by one, Journey "musicians" run the gauntlet. Drummer Steve Smith starts off with an easy crowd. Then Jonathan Cain, Ross Valory, Neal Schon and Steve Perry try their response times to dodge the more-active- audience's tags and hide from the seeking fans. Loyal, mindless minions of roadies and a generous manager offer occasional rescues, but—true to life—they're rarely there when you really need 'em.

Journey Escape tactics include going full-tilt all the time, playing the edges, grabbing every roadie within amp-tossing distance, and watching for the smiling manager and idling vehicle (both easy to miss). Another helpful hint is to turn off the sound. It's not essential to the game. And a non-stop version of "Don't Stop Believing" that sounds like a hungover Thelonious Monk thumping a two-dollar xylophone won't help your reactions.

First impressions of Bermuda Triangle are that it's a variation of the Space Jockey-Air/Sea Battle-Laser Blast theme, with hot space rocks hurtling toward you. But it's just a kid's chocolate micro-chip rendition of "Hotbox" or "Tisket-a-Tasket." Your sub is on a mission to gather artifacts from the floor of the ocean. However, various sharks, squids, lampreys and more human enemies clutter up your work area. The best way to play archealogist/sub commander is to lean on the fire button (to send a constant stream of bursts toward the right screen) and concentrate on maneuvering around the sea litter. Unidirectional firing requires frequent loop-the-loops to perform squid ambushes and bushwacks on drones and clones, but the only challenge comes from the random blasts of the surface laser, which cuts a wide swath across the water.

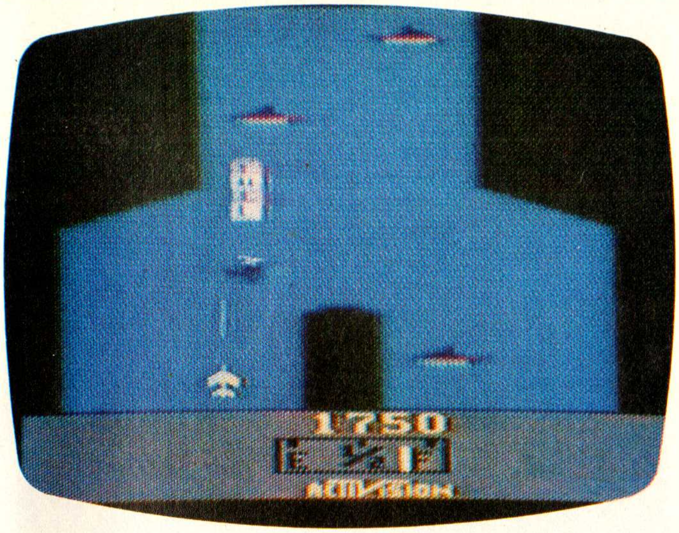
Escape deserves most of its hoopla, but Bermuda Triangle should disappear into a black hole. Or is that trademark infringement?

Bill Knight

RIVER RAID
Activision
(Atari VCS)

As a diehard Zaxxon fan—not to mention someone who thought *Apocalypse Now* was a laugh a minute—I'm coming back to play River Raid more often than I thought I would.

Much like ColecoVision's super smash Zaxxon, River Raid puts you-the-player behind the cockpit of a jet. Your goal is to destroy as many helicopters, jets, bridges and tankers as possible before your fuel runs out—and pow, you're MIA faster than napalm dispersing in the morning. Unlike Zaxxon, you're dealing with only two dimensions—though all four points of the compass are available to you, there's no sign of that added dimension of *altitude* that makes Zaxxon so nifty. Fur-



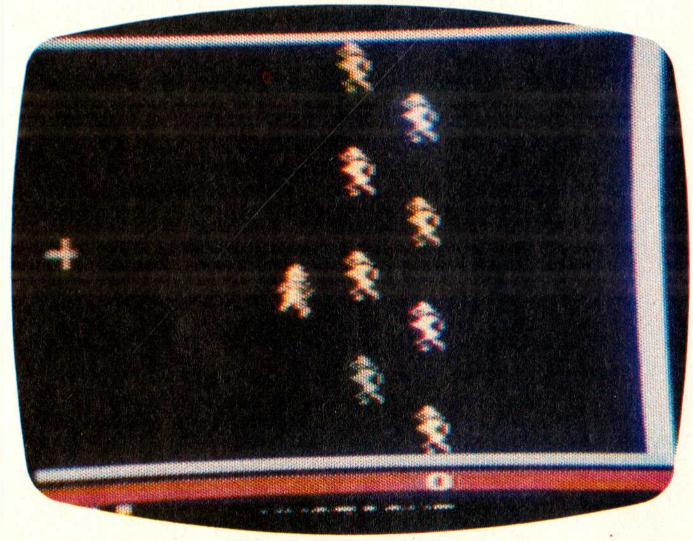
thermore, you're looking straight down at your jet from above—which actually is *less* confusing than Zaxxon's unique "odd angled" perspective. River Raid's easier to handle faster.

It isn't merely a question of destruction here, though, as your goal isn't only to score points, it's to stay in flight long enough to be *able* to score points. Which means not running out of fuel. River Raid offers the option of putting up or shutting up: either blow up a fuel depot for big points or, when necessary, fly over it and "tank up." The slower you pass, the more fuel you'll end up with. Learning just when to do this is what you'll have the most fun figuring out.

Carol Shaw, designer of River Raid, recommends "jotting down notes" in the game's instructions, this so players can keep track of the many bends, turns and narrow passageways in the river —advice which somehow seems a letdown: spontaneity, or the capability of even a first-time player doing well on a vidgame should never be overlooked.

In all, though, River Raid's got something even Zaxxon doesn't—the opportunity for the player to increase in skill at a consistent rate, which means there isn't a space monster waiting at 10,000 points or wherever that's impossible to knock off, you'll be breaking your own previous high score every few plays. And that's gratifying. Players that score the maximum one million points, we're told, will see all points on the screen replaced by exclamation points; players that score 999,999 just get to see Marlon Brando's stomach.

Kevin Christopher



BACHELOR PARTY BEAT 'EM & EAT 'EM Mystique
(Atari VCS)

Dirty videogames—just what the world's been waiting for.

You've probably already heard the big stink about Mystique's Custer's Revenge game by now. Women's rights groups were justifiably appalled by the sexual assault that's the object of the game. American Indians were understandably outraged by the fact that the victim of the assault was an Indian girl. Videogamers, meanwhile, were just plain *insulted* by the cart's total lack of fun.

All the protest led to C.R. being rightfully canned, but Mystique still has two more "Adult" carts to complain about. The alleged X-ratedness is no problem amongst us alleged grown-ups here in Eye/Hand. We be *real* sophisticated!

These games just plain stink! They're attractive graphically and emit interesting sound effects, no problem there. The actual play action is the problem.

Bachelor Party is nothing more than a particularly poor variation of Breakout that's been tipped-over sideways, so you can play it prone, no doubt. You, the joystickee, have a bachelor you want to bounce off two adorable rows of eligible female figures. As there are only eight bachelorettes to deal with, things get boring, *fast*.

The better-looking, if even *worse* playing, B.E.&E.E. *is* Kaboom for all practical purposes. This one's a tuffy to describe in an apple-pie-product such as VIDIOT. Let's just say, what you're pounding on is not Betty Crocker Fudge Nutty cake mix, and what's being consumed is not Gatorade. Apprehend all the falling objects and you'll hear a computer version of "Pop Goes The Weasel." Hilarious.

The way we see it, *any* videogame can be X-rated if you use your imagination a little. No need to name names, but *that one with the lady amphibian*...hey—is your mind in the gutter or what?!

Rick Johnson

SPIDERMAN Parker Bros.
(Atari VCS)

Commercials, commercials, commercials! *Mein Gott*! I'm getting sick and tired of all these videogame commercials on TV! *"Stomp dem donkeys!"* they say. *"Squoosh dem chickens!" "It's hot, it's wild!" "It's the ultimate in sleep technology!"*

Oops, wrong commercial! Not that you'd know it after playing Parker Bros. new Spiderman cartridge, though. What sounded like the Tet Offensive of climbing games turns out to be about as exciting as being a head-treater at a creosote pole-treating plant.

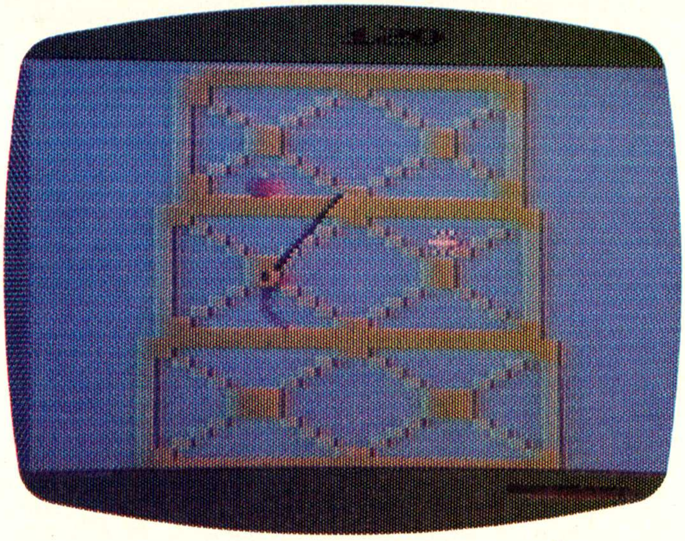
Spiderman features a 13 story skyscraper topped by a high voltage tower resembling obese, humiliated tinsel. Various criminals—possibly on loan from Gangster Alley—appear randomly in windows, attempting to clip the hero's web. If he makes it to the top, he has to avoid his arch enemy, the dreaded Green Goblin, and defuse time bombs planted by the lime slime.

The main gimmick here is Spidey's web fluid. Shooting from the canister on his wrist, it attaches to the building so that the featured insect can climb it to reach his destination.

What's definitely irresistible and way more fun besides is to *let that sucker dangle*! He just swings back and forth like an idiot until a baddie reaches out and clips his web. *Sneep-sneep!* Then the red and blue arachnid tumbles in delicious slow motion and hits the pavement with a satisfying *blat*.

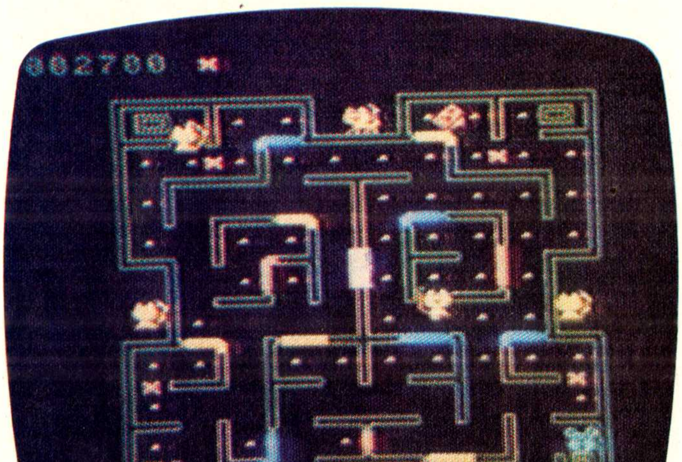
The problem is slow action. We're talking *slow* here, like in big-dead-lizards-into-gas-pedal chow. As a player whose difficulty switch is usually set on "none," I did surprisingly well—always a bad sign—even when the speed picked up in subsequent rounds. It really *is* more enjoyable to leave him hanging precariously from the tower or just plain nudge him in the direction of suicide.

As cart-crit Robert Cohen once said, there is no bottom to worse. That goes double here, but at least there's



enough bottom for a convincing splatter!

Rick Johnson



MOUSE TRAP
Coleco
(ColecoVision)

Good stuff. Mouse Trap is Coleco's home version of Exidy's arcade machine, and if it isn't close to 100 percent arcade quality, I don't know what is.

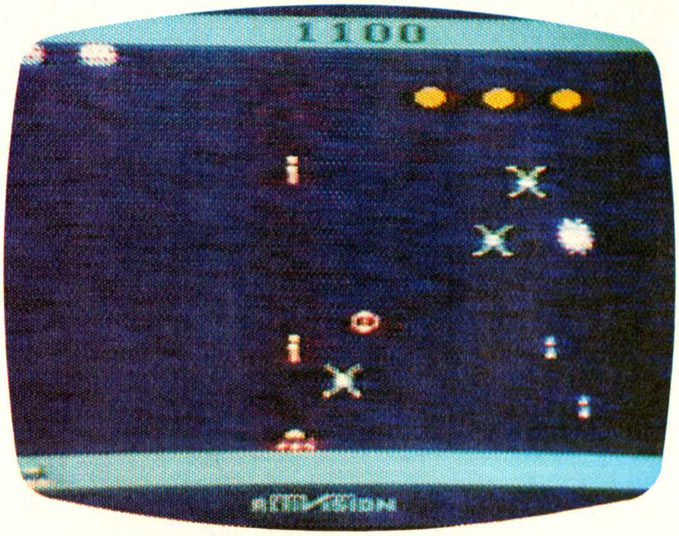
It's a fun game—as maze games go, sure, it approaches Pac-ness, but it offers a few things that game didn't that make it worthwhile all on its own. For starters, it's the first of the "first string" ColecoVision games that incorporates the Coleco joystick at *close* to its potential. Like Intellivision's comparatively shoddier method, plastic overlays are supplied with the cart—but here they should actually be called *underlays*, because that's exactly what they do: they lay *underneath* the grids that Coleco wisely provided, enabling the player to feel, by touch alone, whether they're pressing buttons 1 through 9. Don't know about you, but the Intellivision easy-way-out—that is, *memorizing* the overlay and then not using it—always seemed to me like a waste of everybody's time.

That said, the rest of the game is fairly routine—you-the-mouse run around the maze, evading the cat while snacking on pieces of "small cheese." Rather than four energy blasts in each corner there are four *bones* nearby, which you can simply munch on and accumulate whenever you need 'em—a neater concept than Pac's, I think. Just press button #5 on your controller and—*woof woof*—you've turned into a dog and are capable of *eating* those too-close cats. Life plainly isn't *like* this, some would say.

Also of nift is the maze's "In" Box, located in Maze Square Central, which mystically teleports you-the-mouse to one of the four Corner Boxes near the bones and... um, you know the rest.

One of Coleco's better games—limited only by the graphics of the arcade version. Chew on *that* bone for a while.

Kevin Christopher



SPIDERFIGHTER
Activision
(Atari VCS)

Spiderfighter uses three tried and true video game ingredients: shooting, bugs and fruit. The graphics are sharp, clear and colorful, the noises agreeable, and, as always, Activision provides names for almost everything.

The player is a "Bug Blaster" at the bottom of the screen. The "Master Nest" comes out from the left, and the fruit is on the top right. The Master Nest is protected by a shield for a few seconds until it releases a "Spy Pod." As long as the Spy Pod remains unblasted, the Master Nest keeps reproducing faster than the waterbugs in your basement.

The other offspring are the Green Widow (it protects the Master Nest and only occasionally kills you) and the Stinger (it tracks you down—quickly). While the player is busy trying to solve the population problem, the Master Nest sneaks over and tries to steal the fruit on the right side of the screen. If it gets away with all three fruits, you lose a blaster. If you kill all the spiders without losing any fruit, you get a bonus blaster in addition to points.

The game is fun, especially for players who like rapid fire shooting action. After the first few racks, the bugs are hopping around like mad, dropping the only thing there is no name for all over you. It's cuter than a Raid commercial.

Joanne Zangrilli

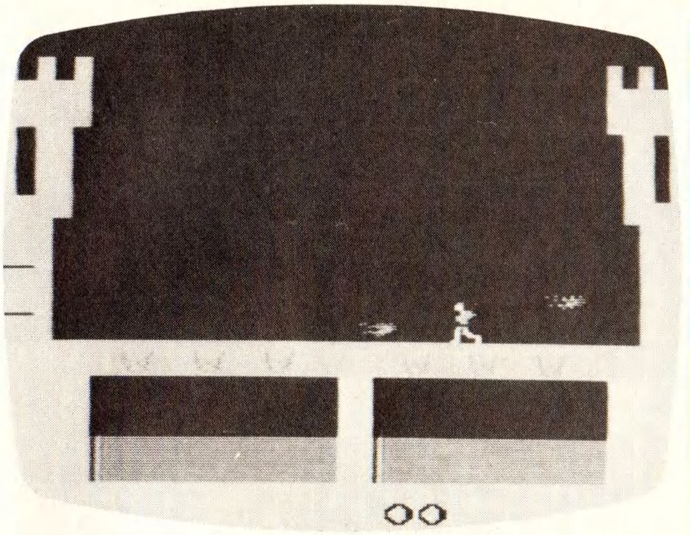
DRAGONFIRE
Imagic
(Atari VCS/Intellivision)

Imagic is out with two versions of their new cartridge, Dragonfire, one for the Atari VCS and one for Intellivision. No complaints here.

OK, here's the poop: a herd of thoroughly impolite, fire-breathing Dragons have booted the King and his pampered menials out of the Castle. "Our Kingdom must now languish under *lizards*!" whines Kingy in the instructions. Liberal democrats, even then!

As Dragonfire gets under way, you find yourself with seven flaxen-haired (*yoo-hoo!*) Princes that resemble Phil Donahue dressed up like a sissy. You, the joystick wielder, must yank him along on a flash dash across the bridge to the Treasure Room.

Not so fast. Dragon hatchlings (*dragoonies?*) are up there passing fiery footballs



Prince does *not* want to receive. He can jump over the low ones, duck under the high ones, plus jump *and* duck simultaneously when *two* fireballs are coming.

Once he makes it to the Treasure Room, Prince must avoid the daddy Dragon's breath as the little liege darts about grabbing treasures. Each time he picks one up, a lovely, round bell-tone sounds out, just like the *Right Answer!* dinger on a game show. Some of these items—jug, lamp, goblet, candelabra—apparently came from a garage sale the Prince in Riddle Of The Sphinx had awhile back. *At least* the jingle-booties and the turquoise dish drainer, anyhoo.

Pick up all the goodies and you find yourself back up on the bridge, ready for more abuse. Sorry, Prince, but this *is* a videogame, after all. If you wanna complain about it, then give us back your six extra lives, wise guy!

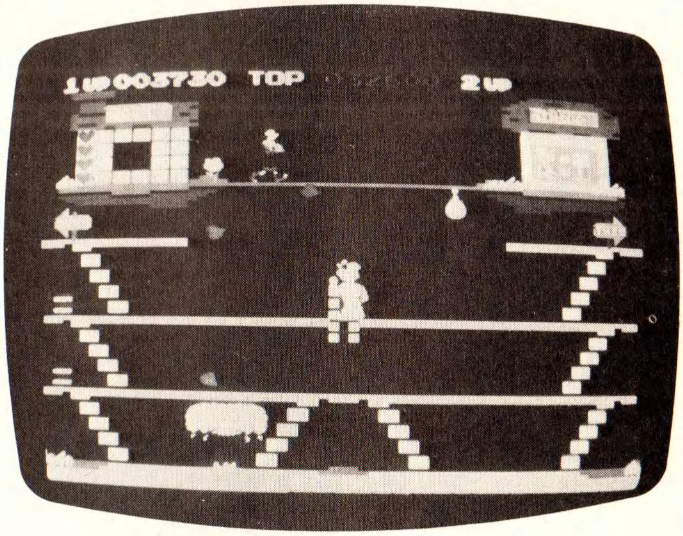
The Intellivision cart differs little from the VCS version, except the Castle looks like it's in a better neighborhood. It *does* grow much more difficult as the game progresses. An arrow-slinging archer appears in the turret and—*lookout!*—the 11th Dragon is invisible. Doesn't help his breath any.

Allow me to share one small tip I blundered into. When you're in the Treasure Room, you can whiz all the way over to the left side of the screen and the Dragon won't be able to fry you. However, this works in the earlier rounds only.

Dragonfire's strong point is the variety of action you'll encounter in every game, unless you're *really* a dope. The jump 'n' duck Bridge-work is enjoyably difficult and, best of all, the Prince makes a *different* sound every time he gets roasted!

Rick Johnson

'CADES



POPEYE
(Nintendo)

Here's just what every kid has been waiting for—a painless way to eat spinach.

Popeye features remarkably sharp graphics—almost like a Saturday morning cartoon—and without a doubt is the best of the Donkey Kong-type arcade games (ah, those Japanese!). The game's strongest point starts out to be a drawback; that is, it's fairly complex to learn, resulting in more than a few wasted tokens before one can get a handle on how to keep Popeye's tatooed muscles from tumbling into the bay. Luckily, I found the game in a 10 tokens/$1 joint which took off some of the pressure.

The basic screen pits Popeye against Brutus for the affections of the lovely Shelley Duvall, *er,* Olive Oyl, who tosses hearts into the air for her man to catch. Popeye must fill his house with hearts without a) letting any fall to the bottom and break (at which point Olive breaks out in tears) or b) getting knocked on his ass by a rather agile (for a big guy) Brutus. Popeye can take a swing at his arch foe only after his spinach fix, and cans frequently appear on one of two ladders for him to grab. Any hero can usually send Brutus flying several times a game.

Helping Brutus (as if he needed it) is the Hag, who pops out at frequent intervals to send bottles flying at Popeye, which he can deflect with the punch button. But one missed jab and Popeye winds up in the drink—and he's only got three lives. Like James Bond, Popeye has to keep himself alive and please a woman at the same time. Of course, the former is easier than the latter.

Once Popeye fills his house with hearts, he moves down the block to a busier scene with Sweet Pea and Wimpy adding to the confusion. The third level takes place on a ship, but I yam what I yam—an impatient game player—and haven't quite mastered the game that far.

Popeye is a challenge from the word go; just ask the best kid at the arcade. He can only play about 10 minutes on a coin.

Bill Paige

TAC/SCAN
(Sega)

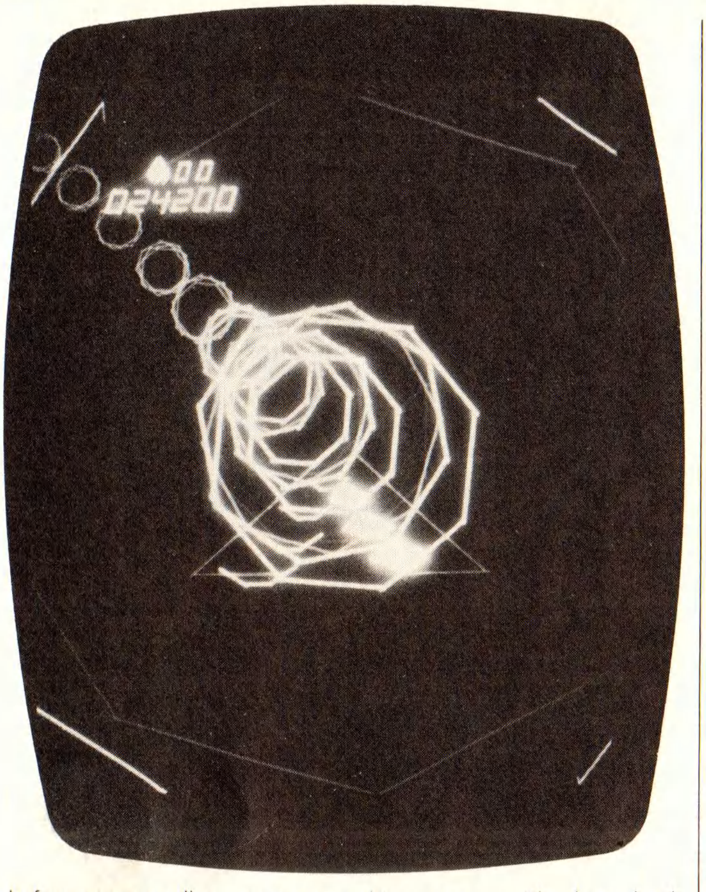
No wimps tiptoeing on hamburgers and lettuce, no trunkless heads slurping and glorping their way through mazes in this one.

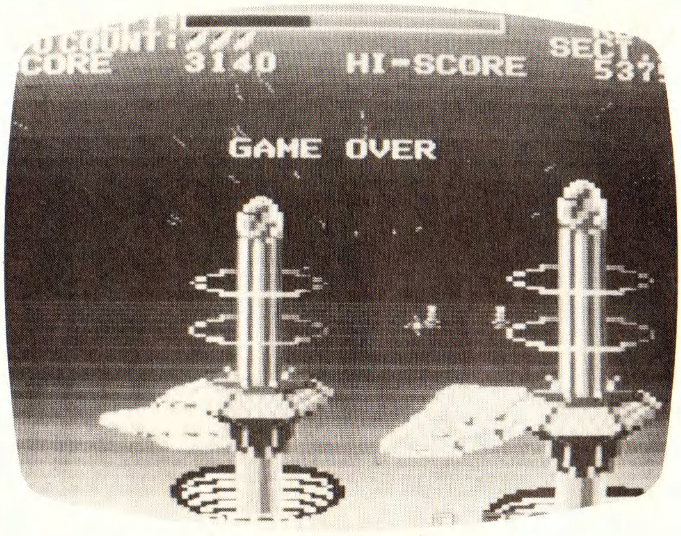
Hell. We're talking a squadron of spaceships, the kind you guide with a main control knob while enemy rockets, torpedoes, and laser rays make you wish you'd stuck to ping-pong for hand-eye coordination. Return fire with none other than the FIRE button and you score bonus points, blasting multiple enemy crafts with a single salvo from your fleet. Quiche-eaters, of course, can use the single target option.

A Reserve Ship Count appears in the upper left corner, if you have time to look. With an astutely-named ADD SHIP button, you can add up to eight extras. You can also add ships by catching the "docking" ones that float about like lint on your eyeball—just properly maneuver the empty cradles remaining after your *own* have been blown to hell. In a gesture of infinite providence, the creators of Tac/Scan also award an extra ship for every 10,000 points.

One of the strategies for lasting the duration of a multisyllable curse is to avoid pressing the ADD SHIP button in the first round of elimination. Hold back, and steer clear of the yellow torpedoes. You'll survive with the extra ships needed to face the second screen, which make Stargate seem like a freeze-frame.

On Screen II, you're traveling into deep space while a new wave of enemy ships bullet by you like trucks on a two-lane highway. Unfortunately, you're confined to a formation with limited firing directions. Random enemy crafts, please note, can shoot at you with impunity. This is one time you might use the ADD SHIP button, preferably





before your cradles are emptied and the GAME OVER notice flashes across the screen. Video life can be harsh and unfair.

Surviving the second screen brings what's left of your tattered fleet to door #3, the threshold of the Space Warp Tunnel, which squirms like a psychedelic slinky across the surface. It's an aerobic workout for the eyes. The object is to keep your squadron from crashing into the ambiguously-defined Tunnel Walls. Sorry to report that you can't rack up points on the third screen—the plan here is simple survival. Very little is offered in the way of positive reinforcement, except your knowing the cycle will repeat itself. Or that you might get your initials in the all-time Top Ten.

Whoopee.

George Piner

BUCK ROGERS/PLANET OF ZOOM

(Sega)

Dull fun is about the best way to describe Buck Rogers—Planet Of Zoom. At least you get your money's worth, but if Annie Oakley were still alive, she'd probably take on this game with her back turned and a dental mirror in one hand. No prizes for imagination handed out here.

An oversized joystick puts you on the bridge, buckeroo, moving your ship from side to side and up and down, trying to avoid an endless stream of flying saucers (looking just like people thought they did in the 1950s), asteroids and other UFOs. For those who like triggers, there's a trigger which fires continuously (the only way to go!) when pressed; for those who like buttons there's a button that does the same thing. The only other controls are buttons marked "fast" and "slow"—guess what they do. The fast button is useful in speeding by the enemy without having the roof cave in on top of your ship; the slow button usually just prolongs inevitable destruction. Might as well get it over with fast, I say.

After passing through eight zones (hyperspacing each time—some gimmicks just never wear out) you get a chance to do battle with the mothership. Digits are your reward, that and a chance to start the whole voyage over again at a higher degree of difficulty. Final annihilation ends the game, as it ends all games.

If you're looking for a breezy, 3-D shoot-'em-up, this is it. Fire up and fire away!

Pete Meyer

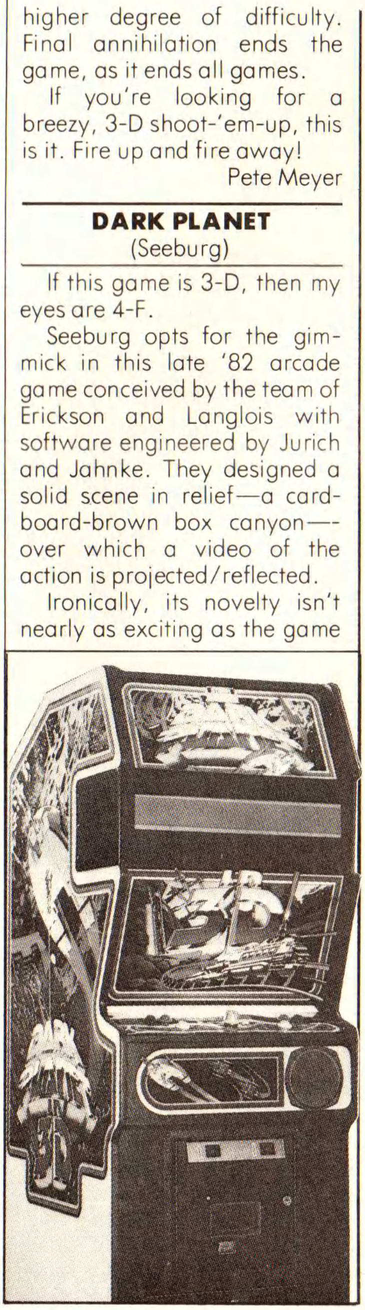
DARK PLANET

(Seeburg)

If this game is 3-D, then my eyes are 4-F.

Seeburg opts for the gimmick in this late '82 arcade game conceived by the team of Erickson and Langlois with software engineered by Jurich and Jahnke. They designed a solid scene in relief—a cardboard-brown box canyon—over which a video of the action is projected/reflected.

Ironically, its novelty isn't nearly as exciting as the game itself: "The MX on Mount St. Helens." The canyon displayed is cluttered with a creek, a steep volcano and various enemy settlements and bases. The ships are ghostly blue characters that become hot red figures after dropping down an access chute to the plain's surface.



The targets are aggressive fighter craft, protective "rail rovers," and sluggish laser trains, plus infrequent cliff emplacements and ground bunkers. Player tools are vertically-deployed bombs and horizontally-beamed laser cannons. If the player drops the bombs saturation-style and sticks to ambushing fighters as they emerge from the surface entrance shaft, the game is half won.

The three worst dangers are menacing *steam clouds* that randomly puff up to envelope the ship with clogging fog; the sudden *volcanic blast*, an eruption which gradually adds an obnoxious cloud cover between the sky and the surface; and the Seeburg's ill-fitted *controls*, which rely on a clumsy Omega Race-type direction knob instead of Right or Left rotate buttons.

Even with its unique setting and inefficient steering, Dark Planet can be mastered well before one becomes cross-eyed. With 100,000 points, a player gets a spare life, but with only 30-40,000 points, you'll make the "Dark Planet Hall of Fame."

And who needs a longer life when fame is at hand?

Bill Knight

Let's be serious now. Can you actually picture Jim Feldman as one of us?!

MY MTV VJ AUDITION

BY JIM FELDMAN

Little did my friend Sue—ace MTV publicist—know what she was doing when, several months ago, she called to suggest that I audition for MTV's newly-announced, sixth VJ (Video Jockey) slot and then write an article about the experience. No doubt she figured that she was doing her job—getting press coverage for her employer—*and* providing a friend with an out-of-the-ordinary story idea. But suddenly filled with visions of glory (delusions of grandeur, if you will), I decided that, all things considered, I was a natural for the VJ slot: An erstwhile actor, I pride myself on my ability to maintain my cool in front of the camera and to express a whole range of emotions with the greatest of ease. Objectively speaking (and if you don't believe me, ask my mother), I am photogenic—videogenic?—enough to pop up on the tube without visually insulting audiences from coast to coast. And most important, as a music critic/journalist and a life-long rock 'n' roll enthusiast (well, ever since I put away my Bambi records), I know whereof I speak when it comes to matters musical. So, why not go for the big time, the big bucks—from my point of view—and the chance to hobnob with all of my, your, or someone's favorite rock stars?! I told Sue, sure, it sounded like a good article idea, but make no mistake about it, the story and the bucks I'd get for writing it were far from my thoughts as I imagined myself the latest MTV sensation.

Well, the check for this story sure will come in handy—I'm going to buy myself a Walkman and maybe fill in my collection of Neil Young, Janis Joplin, Van Morrison, and Ramones records. In other words, I won't be showing up any time in the near or far future on your cable TV screen. No, I don't know who will be the new VJ. He or she hasn't been chosen yet, as I write this. And nobody called from MTV to tell me to stop working on my "personality" and dust off my typewriter. So, how do I know I didn't get the job? Oh, I know, all right. Sometimes reality is just inescapable.

Clever fellow that I profess to be, I spent the first part of the requisite formal interview with MTV Executive Producer Julian Goldberg wearing my journalist's cap, figuring that the more information I had, the better I'd be able to convince Goldberg that I was THE ONE. He told me that as a result of trade ads announcing the nationwide search and plenty of word-of-mouth buzz, MTV received over 1,500 submissions. In addition to the photos, resumes, and occasional videotapes from expected applicants—radio personalities, music journalists, music, TV, and radio industry people, actors, etc.—there were submissions from dentists, housewives, construction workers, students, stewardesses, you name it. Looking for people with valuable credentials and solid musical backgrounds (whether professional or not), MTV execs narrowed the group of applicants to about 150 for auditions and interviews in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. While all this was very interesting, it only made me nervous, since I made the lucky 150 largely, if not entirely because of my supposed journalistic interest. (Of course, there was a chance that my 8x10 glossy and my resume knocked 'em silly, but only a chance.)

An erstwhile actor, I pride myself on my ability to maintain my cool in front of the camera...

Then it was my turn to answer some questions. "Why do you want to be a

J.J. Jackson discusses who's who with Pete Townshend.

John Cougar offers Nina Blackwood his "Bootie."

Martha Quinn and Alan Hunter remind George Thorogood that Jim Feldman has been a rock star all his life.

VJ Martha Quinn watches Billy Joel make a point.

VJ?" "Why do you want to be on TV?" "Are you willing to give up a tremendous amount of your privacy?" "How much do you know about music?" "How would you handle interviews with rock stars?" "How well do you take direction?" "Could you start right away?" "Are you contractually obligated elsewhere?" Look, I know how to sell myself (no, not *that* way), but occasionally sheer desire tripped me up, so I would give myself B + /A- for the interview. Before I left his office, however, Goldberg tried to de-glamorize the VJ job, maybe to see if I'd lose interest: "It's almost a 7-days-a-week job...VJs have to do lots of research...read biographies...listen to albums...watch all the clips...go to concerts, clubs, parties...VJs participate in writing scripts...shoot five days a week...personal appearances..." Undeterred, I said, "See ya at the audition."

Up early the morning of my audition, I worried: What to wear? When in doubt, I stick to basics—blue blazer, button-down shirt, rep tie; i.e., I'm a prep from way back. Full of confidence, I took one last, admiring look in the mirror before heading out the door, and thought to myself, "Why don't I just pretend that the zit in the middle of my foreheard isn't really there?" When I arrived at the studio where the tapings were being held, I was handed over 20 pages of copy to study before my big chance. Short announcements, fully scripted news stories about Keith Richards, the Beatles, etc., copy for an MTV T-shirt pitch spot, short items about Ian Hunter, Glenn Frey, "Tainted Love," and Bill Wyman, and other short spots. Boy, did I study hard.

Finally, it was my turn. I twitched too much, but in general, I think I handled the scripted news stories well, if a bit grimly (Smile, Jim.). The short news items, some of which I had to improvise, were OK, too, although I was suffering from an incredible stiff neck by this point. And the T-shirt spot was fine; I made up a little story about going out dancing in my MTV T-shirt—even if I did crumple up the T-shirt. But oh Lord, did I blow it when it came time for my spontaneous video resume. Not only couldn't I think of anything—ANYTHING AT ALL—to say, but when I finally decided to say that I've been a rock critic for a number of years, I opened my mouth and out came, "I've been a rock star for a number of years." And, if possible, things only got worse after that.

So, I'm not going to be a VJ on MTV. So what? I gave it a shot, right? And that's what counts, right? But please—be kind, MTV. Burn my audition tape, and let's pretend it never happened. ■

NINA BLACKWOOD IS A VID-KID!

Nina spends most of her time on a TV screen, bringing you the latest rock videos as a VJ on MTV. So it only makes sense that the lovely Ms. Blackwood spends her leisure time in front of a TV screen, playing the latest in videogame technology. It's all rock 'n' roll to her!

photo by John Bellissimo/Retna

INSIDE VIDEODROME:

No! Wait! Debbie! Hey! Whoa! C'mon, the nude scene comes *later*!

David Cronenberg's Mind Over Matter

BY TOBY GOLDSTEIN

David Cronenberg doesn't look like the kind of guy who'd make movies about people's heads being blown up, a man's innards becoming the convenient repository for hallucinogenic videocassettes, or a woman waking up from surgery with a full-size ravenous sexual organ under her arm. In fact, the boyish-looking 39-year-old director of those sequences—in *Scanners*, *Videodrome*, *They Came From Within* and several other chillers, wouldn't want to see any of his horrific visions happen in real life. But, he explains via phone from the small-town Ontario set of *The Dead Zone*—his next film—perpetually

facing the demons in movies is one way to conquer the fear of getting out of bed in the morning.

"Well, I'd like to come to some sort of resolution between life and death that is positive," says Cronenberg, attempting to explain the "death is life" attitude which pervades many of his films, particularly the latest, *Videodrome*. On the surface an adventurous tale of sleazy cable-TV pornographer Max Renn (James Woods) who gets emotionally and physically enmeshed by a pirated torturama show that's a little too real, *Videodrome* ultimately raises serious questions of whether media life might be preferable to day-to-day biological existence. In other words, what's more real, a trusted televised announcement or our easily deceived, so-called conscious minds?

"Johnny Carson could've died three years ago," says Cronenberg, only half joking. "Who would know? Haven't you ever had an occasion where you'd be watching someone on television and you'd say, 'Hey, is he still alive? Didn't he die last year?'" Thinking about being a citizen of this land of perpetual reruns, I scarily consider the possibility that, like *Videodrome*'s media professor, Brian O'Blivion, our very own president is long gone and reaching us in a series of pre-recorded tapes. Face it—most politicians' broadcasts are nothing but issuespeak responses to crises that regularly recur. Now that we're all completely paranoid, let's continue...

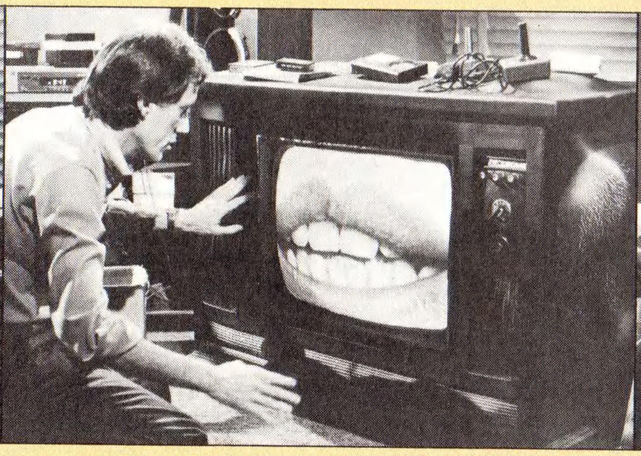
Cronenberg's fascination with the media's long arm—in part stemming from his origins in the land of Marshall McLuhan, the key communications theorist of our time—leads him to excitedly consider just how extensive its reach may be. "Imagine a war that's fought only in the media sense. A country could fight very successfully, win a brilliant victory, have world opinion totally on its side and never have to send a soldier into the field. Just to do it totally through the media. Stage little things to be videotaped and sent around the world." Now, if we could just get the U.S. and Russia to agree to tough it out over a hot game of Missile Command, what a better world it would be.

Naturally, James Woods has got to be encouraged into his fascination with the "videodrome" programming by a seductive partner. Going on the same instincts that have made him the standout critical favorite among horror film directors, Cronenberg tested Blondie's Deborah Harry for the key role of Nicki. Those who've always wondered what about Deb has kept Chris Stein's fire lit for a decade will understand as they watch her sensual portrayal of radio therapist Nicki, a girl who likes to have her body abused when she's not counseling suicides. Recalls Cronenberg, "I saw her in *Union City*, then she came up to Toronto and auditioned for me, and I liked her very much. Even though she was very inexperienced, I was willing to take on the responsibility of trying to guide her through the parts she didn't know."

The director insists that Blondie's sex-goddess routines had absolutely nothing to do with Deborah's winning the part. "The S&M gear that Blondie always used seems very cartoony. I mean, my daughter, who's 11, is into Blondie... and I thought that *Videodrome* was somewhere else quite entirely." Let's put it this way—once you've seen the film, Blondie's "In The Flesh" will never sound quite the same.

By making his next project Steven King's best-selling *The Dead Zone*, Cronenberg will likely have more commercial exposure than ever before. With luck, it will not change his distinction from the pack of rip 'n' tear theme filmmakers. For so many schlockmeisters, horror movies are simply a sequence of one mutilation after the next, except that the girl who doesn't put out usually gets to live. Cronenberg, however, is out to try and understand what fear, or pain, or death really means. He's not set up for exclusive instant gut-grabbers, though they do occur. His movies don't have neat little endings, but leave their audiences deliberately confused about who exactly won a particular battle, and at what cost—much like real life.

"If you simplify things to the point where everything's tied up neatly," believes Cronenberg, "you can get that on series television. I think movies should do more than that." ■



ROCK VIDIOCY

WHAT'S BLACK & WHITE & WATCHED ALL OVER?

Randy Newman—Hey girls! I'm actually Robin Williams! Let's hang ten!

Devo—To make sure he never leaves home without it, Mark stuffs his American Express card in his ear!

BY DAVE DiMARTINO

If you've been listening, there's been a lot of people using the word "racism" lately that might not have been using it before. It's a touchy subject, no lie—but it's galling to hear it used so casually.

Here's the scoop: You've probably read someone, somewhere, dismissing MTV's music programming as racist—this because black acts are very rarely featured and, when featured, are black "rock" bands like the Bus Boys, Gary "U.S." Bonds, or the English Beat. When I heard about the controversy and MTV's resulting defensiveness, it seemed hilariously appropriate, typical of our Wacky America and obviously true. Where *were* these great Rick James videos I'd seen at clubs?

When I saw Prince's "1999" video on MTV soon after, it seemed no "victory" for black music; a black friend of my wife's, over watching while I was, remarked "it *figures* they'd show him," somewhat disgustedly. As a white 29-year old who, let's face it, has spent less-than-zip years overly familiar with black culture, I wasn't surprised by her comment so much as the fact that it was an issue, that it had been discussed, I assume, by my wife's friend with her other black friends. Frankly, I didn't even think they'd *notice*—just dandy of me, I realize.

When I asked her what she'd like to *see*, though, she startled me: "Pieces Of A Dream," she said.

"They're *schlock*," I told her.

"No, they're not," she told me.

And I didn't know what to say.

* * *

To throw some true facts around, I think it's common knowledge that rock 'n' roll's roots lie in R&B, and that blacks in the late '40s and '50s were mercilessly ripped off by a white culture that "cleaned up" the black music—stylistically, lyrically and emotionally—and made millions. The same facts dictate that in the Good-Old-'60s, there was Stax and Motown and no one cared who was black or white, it was all just groovy, man...

On the other hand, in 1968

I once went to a nearly pop festival, watched a very black Jimi Hendrix play, and thought it was great. More interesting, I *think* I saw Marvin Gaye at the same fastival—I don't know. I probably left for the other stage, to see Sweetwater or Pacific Gas & Electric (*Their* lead singer may have been black but...didn't "sound" it...). At the time, I thought Marvin Gaye was boring. Just like I thought Aretha Franklin's "Respect" was. And I thought Sly & the Family Stone were not only banal but *liked because they were black* by white people in those very "Liberal" '60s.

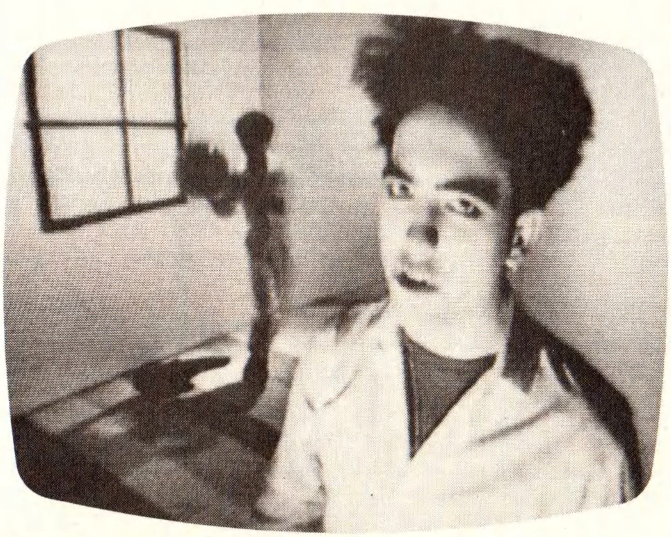
None of which is to demonstrate that I was any more of a moron than you were or weren't, and I certainly don't mean to "fess up" now, either. What I'm trying to figure out is why call MTV racist when our entire musical *culture* has been going that way since 1960? In 1983, as a typical white 29-year-old, I have been phased out of appreciating black music proper by a system that's elaborately fed upon itself and now provides the lowest common denominator in entertainment.

Let's be realistic. I own lots of records and have been getting them free for years. I've got loads of rock albums, fewer jazz albums, and even fewer "black" albums. If I listed the titles, and you've been reading rock mags for a while, you'd chortle—James Brown, Chic, Parliament, The Jacksons, Prince, Al Green, Rick James, Marvin Gaye, (fave album of '82 was *Here, My Dear*, but it was out for "a while"), Ray Parker—superb artists, but, as I'm sure my wife's friend would admit, not exactly Pieces Of A Dream.

Michael Jackson—New "black" video on MTV.

Greg Kihn—Rates high on the subliminal guacamole scale.

The Cure—You want "Toby Dammit," you pay for it!



The point, you see, is the MTV would *not* show Pieces Of A Dream any more than they'd show the latest video by Kenny Rogers or the Angry Samoans—because each have been stratified by our Electric Age as playing specific *types* of music. And what might have made Lorne Greene's "Ringo," Paul Mauriat's "Love Is Blue," the Standells' "Dirty Water" and Richard Harris's "MacArthur Park" bonafide *hits* of '60s Pop Culture clearly no longer works—and in fact hasn't been working since radio stations found an "easier" way to rate record popularity than simply by the number of requests. We have allowed *all* music to become "like" some other piece, trusted numbers-of-yesses, and computerized ourselves until things *no longer compute*.

Which is a tired argument, one so ordinary you might think it lacks credibility. But it doesn't.

The reason you don't see Marvin Gaye or Rick James on MTV is the same reason you haven't heard them on your AOR station for years. *Someone thinks you'll hate them.* What no one admits, of course—particularly the people who collect the same "black" records that I do— is that you probably *will* hate them, for a while, just like if I brought 35 Ravi Shankar albums over to your house, you'd slam the door in my face. You wouldn't want to hear it because you're never really *heard* it, and it wouldn't sound right.

What's funny is that the very stagnant AOR radio format is now folding back into itself—temporarily, at least, and only slightly—and people no longer want to hear the 15th xerox of Loverboy, who sound like Foreigner, who sound like Free, and maybe Styx, who sounded like Yes, *ad pukias*. End result is that maybe you're hearing Flock Of Seagulls, or Duran Duran, Adam Ant or maybe Culture Club—who don't sound like Styx *or* Led Zeppelin, but do share one other trait:they're visually appealing. Just like Prince.

End result is that I have absolutely no doubts about the selling power of MTV, that it currently affects more music than anything else has since radio consultant Lee Abrams made oatmeal of the FM charts, and that when other music video sources become as widely spread, as they surely will, Pieces Of A Dream will be "like" Barry Manilow or Air Supply—*formatted*, in the classic '80s AOR perspective—just as Prince will be "like" Van Halen or Adam Ant.

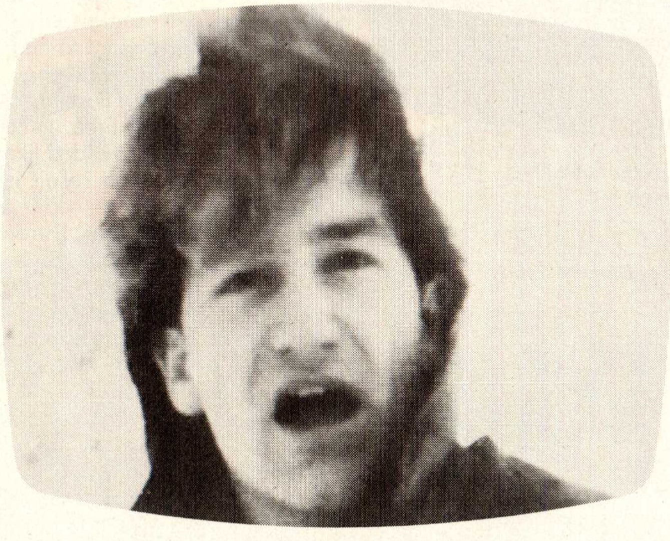
screen photos by Larry Kaplan

I'm too inept to really take any moral stance other than the obvious, so let's just say that if more people buy "black" records than "white" records, there'll be more "black" videos than "white" ones, and that things really haven't changed since Pat Boone sang "Tutti-Frutti" in 1956. And when I interviewed Rick James in 1981, he told me that *Street Songs'* chart positions in *Billboard* were "bullshit," and that the magazine ignored inner city sales, and that the album sold more than most people think. I don't really think he was lying.

☆ ☆ ☆

While we're on the subject: Grace Jones's super *One Man Show* is currently available and it's one of the best video presentations I've seen. My co-editor told me that he saw a clip on the USA Network's *Nightflight*—does that mean it's *not on MTV?* Just asking...

One other ramble: A recent PBS fundraiser on Detroit's Channel 56 brought a volley of music programming, including Granada TV's *Don't Knock The Rock* with Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Gene Vincent and the Animals. Great fun, especially for videotapers—raw footage is *absolutely the best* to collectors, and the Animals alone here are priceless. What preceded the special however, was a rerun of the Beach Boys' *20th Anniversary Special*, and the potential for raw footage *here* was amazing. The good stuff: footage from 1965's surfploitation flick *The Girls On The Beach*, *The Andy Williams Show* and *The Kraft Music Hour*. Most disappointing, though, was the consistent use of *recent* footage shot at Knebworth, in Britain. With all that potential, why show a glorious American band at it's worst instead of it's heyday? How about *complete* footage of the bands on those shows? It's what made *The Compleat Beatles* so disappointing—just a tease. Raw footage, *please*...


U2—The beauty of time is that it's "snowing."

☆ ☆ ☆

And in keeping with the rawness, another batch of random snips from MTV, rock videos at their worst and... *best?*

best

THE CURE: "Let's Go To Bed"—Love the band, but this video I enjoy simply because it will be *incredibly* dated in 10 years, and I'm looking forward to it. Good song. Visually as indicative of rock culture during the '80s as the cover of *Disreali Gears* was to the '60s. Seriously.

STYX: "Heavy Metal Poisoning"—This may be my favorite video of the year, simply because I've yet to put into words why I find this band so incredibly obnoxious, and here's this video doing all the work for me. As a former philosophy student, let me recommend this one to people who want to figure out a) Is Heavy Metal bad? b) Are Styx bad? and c) Should everyone *kill themselves?* Three "Yesses" tell the tale...

RANDY NEWMAN: "I Love L.A."—Bitter Randy's nonetheless put together a goodie, a Chamber Of Commerce vid, basically, with cleavage and more Hawaiian shirts than anyone could ever possibly want to see. Innate cynicism—on *your* part, not just his—makes it all work.

Styx—We are the most obnoxious band!

GREG KIHN BAND: "Jeopardy"—Though Greg's bland more often than not, what especially helps this vid is the narrative within—Greg's getting married—and the two-second nod toward Thalidomide babies. I didn't think he had it in him.

DEVO: "That's Good": I'm giving them more credit here than they deserve, but as someone who's followed them from way back, I admire the french fry/donut coupling here and most importantly, *respect* the manipulative powers. The cheaper their videos look, the more work it looks like they've put into them. Also, one of their better songs.

worst

NAKED EYES: "Always Something There To Remind Me"—It's utterly despicable that bands can make a living by digging up classic hits like this and making malt-o-meal out of them, especially *this* song. I mentioned it earlier, but one more time: an insult to everyone's intelligence. *This* is a formula?

NEAL SCHON & JAN HAMMER: "No More Lies"—No more lies? OK. Jan Hammer must feel like an idiot, cast as a sex symbol in this video. He looks like one. Neal Schon sings better than Steve Perry does, but could never make as much money at it—which is why this video exists in the first place. Extremely offensive to women.

U2:"New Year's Eve"—This is from the band's latest LP, *War*, but the video is lame compared to the record. The idea that this band can fly to some snowy place, dance around and call it art is as stupid as it gets. Will "The Edge" have a hard time convincing his grandchildren he was once "famous"? And actually *named* "The Edge"?

THE FLIRTS: "Jukebox"—Incriminating evidence that all you need in rock video are several breasts and maybe a face or two. This band could be the next Cake...

KIM CARNES: "Just Say You Don't Know Me"—That the producers here don't want to show how *wrinkled* Kim Carnes' face is—sick but true—is probably the most embarrassing thing I've ever seen shown on MTV. I hope she's ashamed, and I hope the clown who made this video feels worse. ■

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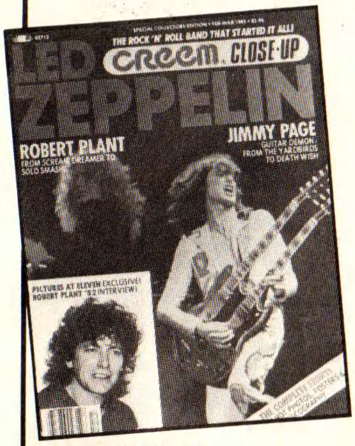

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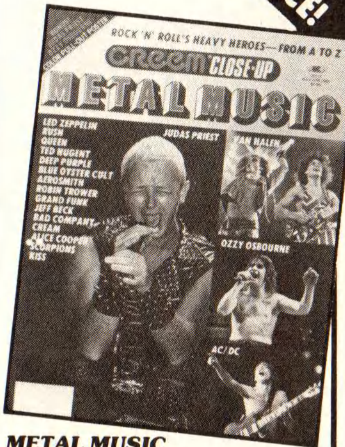

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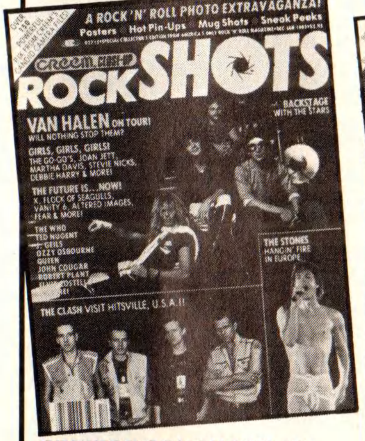

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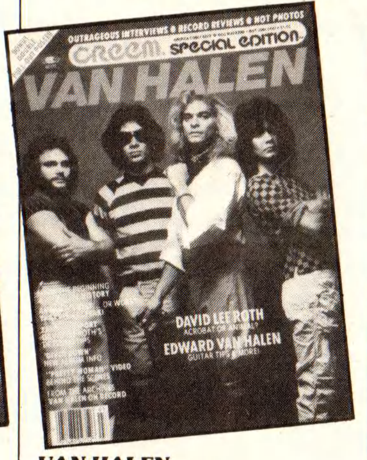

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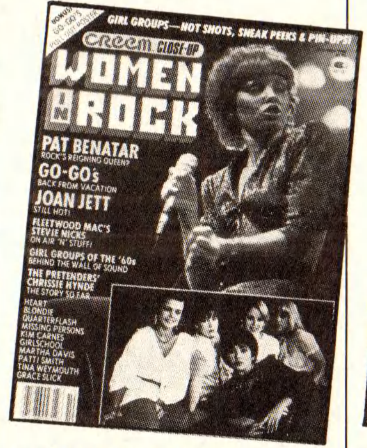

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Electronic Q & A

I made several Super 8 films when I was a high school student, and now I'm wondering what to do with them. I never spliced them all together, because I recorded several soundtracks for each on a separate tape machine, and it's too awkward to keep switching tapes or to attempt to do overdubs all over again. A good friend told me that the best solution was to transfer them to videotape. First of all, is this true? Second of all, will it cost a bunch?

—Clarence Lozaw, Boston, MA

•First of all, yes, it *is* true. As long as you have access to a videocassette recorder, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain by transferring from film to tape. Just find a video or film store that will transfer each film directly to videocassette. Check the paper for ads. You'll have to assign the order you'd like them to be recorded in—tell them, and also tell them how long an interval you'd like between films. Give yourself a little leeway, and here's why: when you bring the tape home, you can hook your audio cassette recorder directly to you videocassette recorder's AUDIO IN input and, at your leisure, synchronize the film action with your various soundtracks. Provided, of course, your VCR has the audio dub capability; by now it's almost a standard feature on most. Be careful, and once you've got everything down the way you want it, you'll never have to haul out the old projector again. And the cost? Thomas Video, in the Detroit suburbs, might be typical—they charge $39 for the first half-hour of film transfered, and $10 for each additional half-hour—*and* they supply the tape. That's pretty representative of the rates you can get around the country these days, so do some investigating and you'll probably find some surprising bargains. For home movie buffs, it's literally the way to go. Next time you spend $20 for a projector bulb that lasts only 18 hours in the first place, give it some thought: tape is simply a much cheaper medium.

I lost the headphones that came with my Sony Walkman 4. Can I use any headphones that fit, or do I need to buy another pair that match exactly?

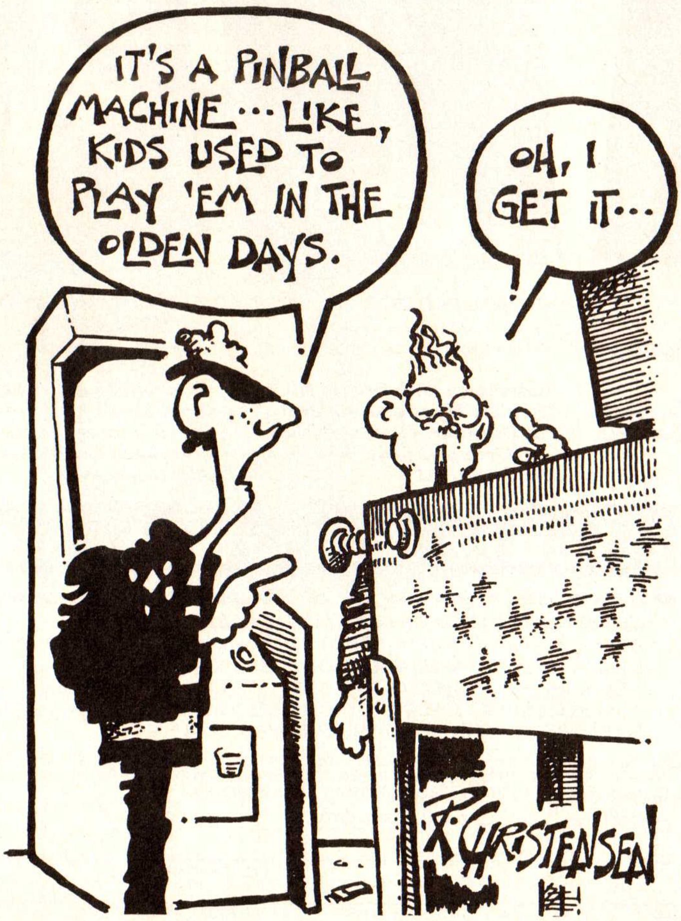
—R. Rose, Minneapolis, MI

•If you liked the sound of the original system, your best bet is to replace the headphones with the same model set. This isn't hard to do as Sony and other manufacturers offer a line of replacement headphones on their acessories list—your hi-fi dealer can order them for you if they're not in stock. But it is also possible to upgrade to a better set of headphones (Sony makes about a dozen models at prices up to $50—meaning the higest priced models cost as much as the tape player you've got). You can even mix and match, using another manufacturers's, so long as the plugs (mini-stereo) are the same (check your instruction booklet). Don't, however, try to use the older, larger headphones sold for use with home stereo systems, as the volume level will be low and the sound won't be that good.

I'm really pissed. I bought the Atari 400 home computer when it first came out and paid almost $400 for it. Now I see it on sale for down to $199 at places like Uncle Steve's in New York. How can the companies let this happen? If they can sell it six months later for half the price why don't they do that to start with?

—G. Arno, Forest Hills, NY

•Makes you wonder how much over $2 it costs to make a computer, doesn't it? With the state of the economy and the number of discount houses in major cities that run mail order operations, the "suggested retail price" that manufacturers used to strong arm retailers into accepting has gone out the window. These days the best bet is to wait to buy any new product until it hits the discount stores—and even then, waiting a few *more* months will see the price come down even lower. If you want something that costs $400, the odds are that you will eventually be able to buy it for $200 or less. But if you want to be first on your block with a new computer or other electric toy, you're going to find you could have bought two for the same price a year later. I'm sure the manufacturers aren't happy about all this; after all, it doesn't do their image and prestige much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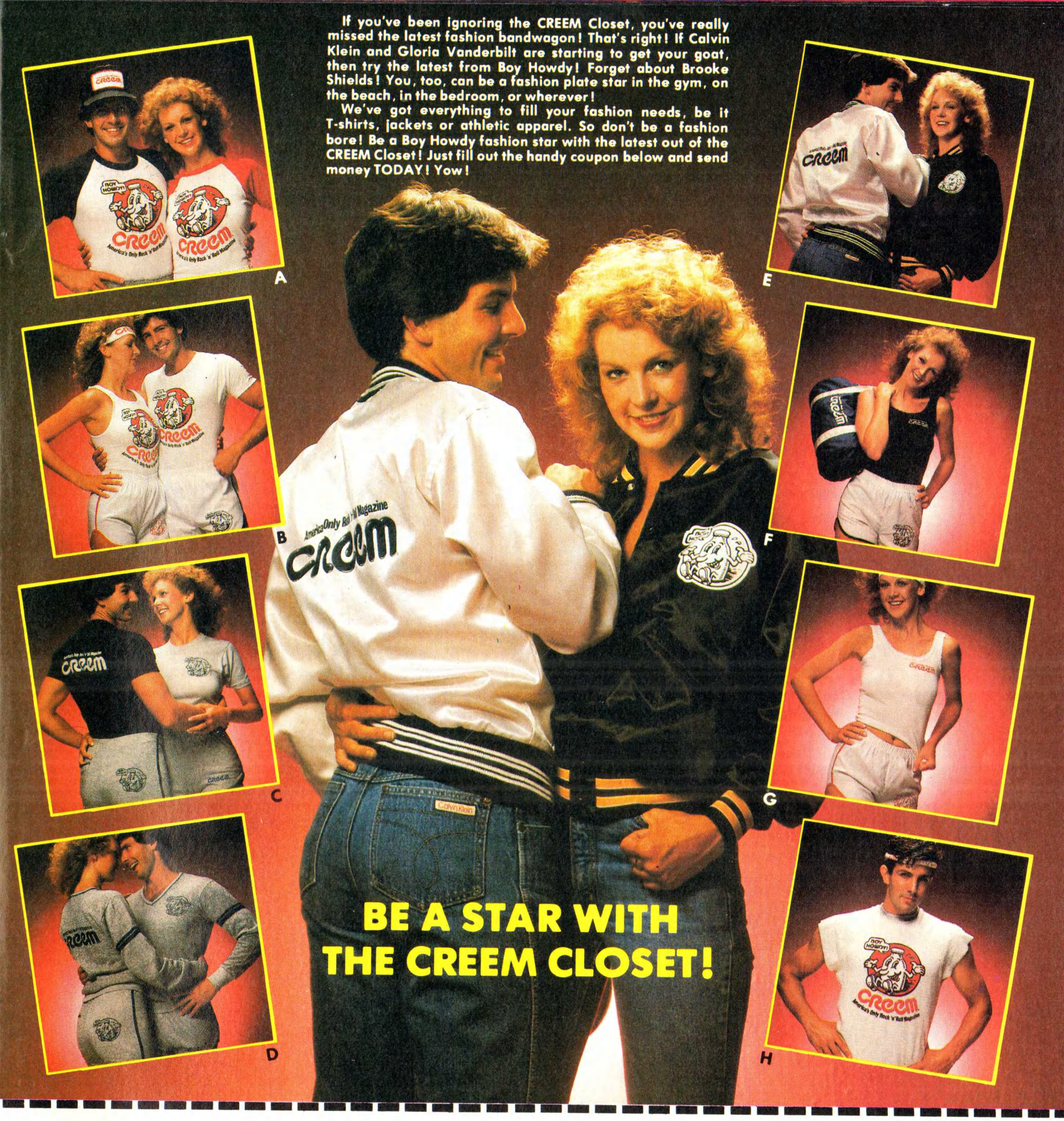

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Brooklyn, N.Y. 11229

good, but on the other hand, it does suggest that they could be selling their computers for a good deal less to start with. Although that doesn't seem to be the kind of game they're playing.

Is there a switch or something so I can connect my videogame machine and my cable box to the back of my TV without having to change the wires everytime I want to switch over from using one or the other? The adapter I got with my video game doesn't seem to fit.

—F. Jacobs, Chicago, IL

•A visit to your local Radio Shack with $10 will fix you up. But before you go, make sure you know exactly what kind of plug you have on the end of your videogame output to your TV, and what kind of plug there is on the back of your TV for TV signal input. Many videogames use RCA phono plug outputs, while many TV sets only have coaxial inputs. If that is the case with your machine, you'll need a phono plug-to-coax adapter for your game cord, and an A-B switch box that takes coax-in's and provides a coax-out to the TV. Then you connect the game and the cable to the inputs on the switch box, and then go out of the switch box on a coaxial cable into the antenna of your TV set. Very simple to do, and the whole set of adapters and box won't be more than $10, but don't forget to make a drawing or bring along the plugs you need to adapt, or otherwise they won't know what you're talking about.

Brand name T-120 video cassettes are selling for about $8 in many stores here, but some of my friends say I should only use high grade video tapes for my VHS. They cost about twice as much. Does it really make any difference?

—T. Baker, San Francisco, CA

•Personally, the Captain has yet to really notice the difference between regular VHS cassettes and the high grade cassettes—and he's watching on a Sony monitor, which should show the difference. For most recording, especially at the 2 hour speed, you'll get fine quality using regular VHS cassettes, and since these are selling for about half the price of the high grades, I personally don't think it's worth paying that much more. So long as you buy name brand cassettes such as Panasonic, BASF or RCA, you should concentrate on how much you're paying for them, not on the supposed "grade" of the tape.

I want to try to make some rap tapes but my cassette machine doesn't have a mike/line mixer. Any ideas?

—D. Belson, Atlanta, GA

•You're going to need a mixer of some sort, as well as a second cassette machine or record player, depending on what format you've got the music on that you want to talk over. There are all sorts of mixers available, but for what you want to do, you only need a four channel stereo mixer. I'd suggest you try the Radio Shack 32-1105 stereo mike/line mixer which sells for $24.95. Your music source (tape cassette or turntable) plugs into two channels of the mixer (left and right stereo channels), and your mike goes into two more channels (for left and right voice sound, or if you can get a mono signal onto the tape, do that). Then use the mixer controls to adjust the level of the mike against the level of the tape. Now connect the mixer output to your stereo cassette recorder, and you're set. Obviously, it's much easier if you have a cassette deck with mike/line mixing, but it can be done with a regular mixer.

My local FM station is broadcasting some concerts that I'd like to record. The only problem is that I'm going to be working while they're on. Is there any way to record radio on a cassette recorder when I'm not home? I know that there are video machines that will do that, but I've never heard of a cassette machine that will.

—S. Snadiski, Pittsburgh, PA

•There isn't much demand for this type of "unattended" recording, but Sony and several of the other big Japanese audio manufacturers do make cassette decks that will accept an accessory timer. You'll have to check if any of the hi-fi stores in your area carry these decks and can get the timer (be sure they get the timer before you buy the whole thing, as sometimes these accessories have a way of taking months to come in). Another method of doing this is to get a timer at a housewares store, the kind used to turn on lights or kitchen appliances when you're not home. Be sure the timer can handle the wattage your tape machine needs. The problem with this second class of timer is that, although they only cost $10 to $20, they aren't as exact as the digital timers used on cassette decks or video equipment. The result is that they don't turn themselves on exactly when you want them to—maybe a few minutes before or after your zero hour—so set them to go on about ten minutes ahead to ensure you get everything you want to record.

Confused about modern tech? Or just got a headache from trying to figure out what's what in electronics? Either way, Capt. Vidiot is all suited up and ready to fly to your rescue. Just drop the Captain a line at Capt. Vidiot, c/o VIDIOT, P.O. Box P-1064, Birmingham, Michigan, 48011, and all your problems are solved.

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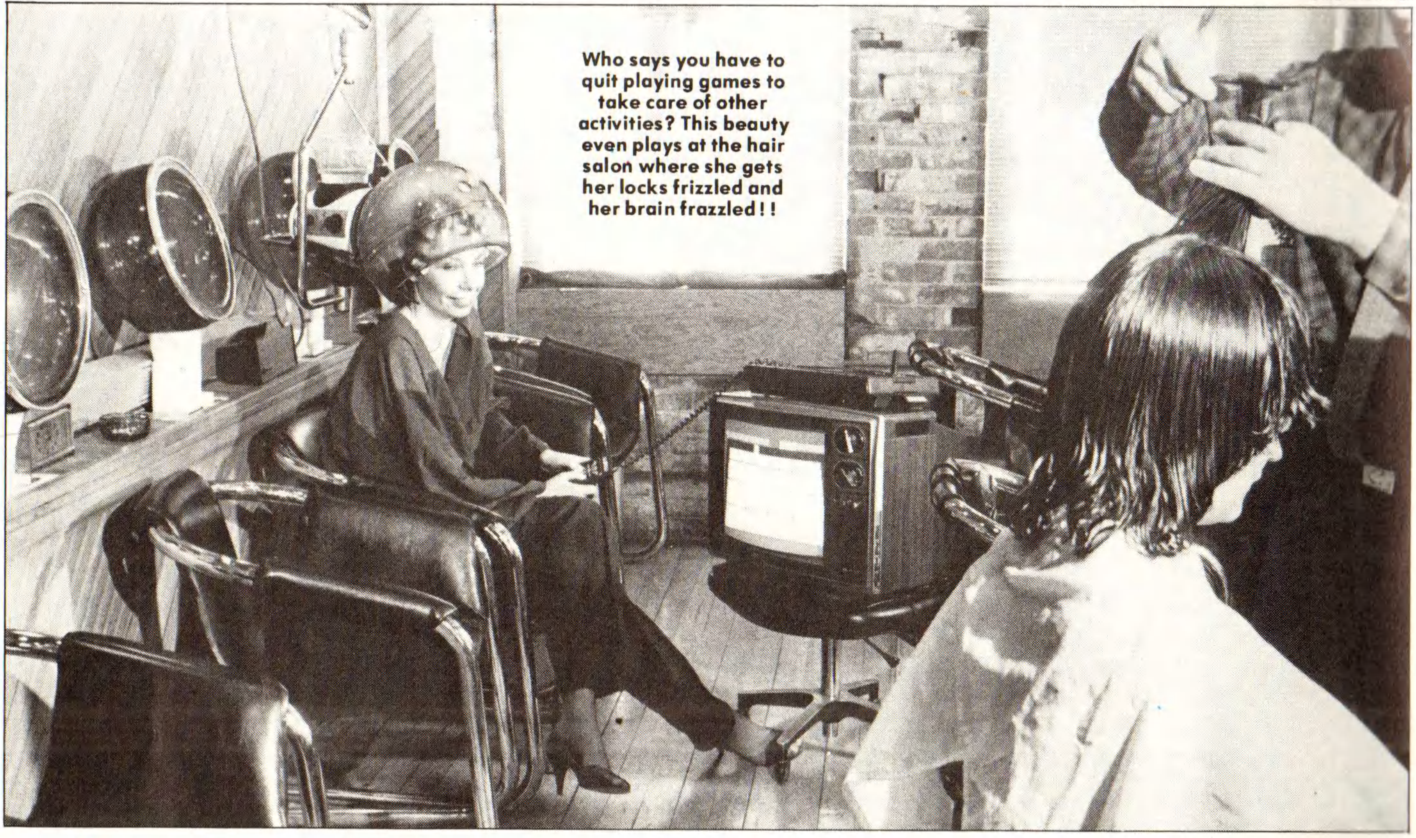
PLACES WE'D LIKE TO PLAY VIDEOGAMES!!



Omar Newman

Who says you have to quit playing games to take care of other activities? This beauty even plays at the hair salon where she gets her locks frizzled and her brain frazzled!!

Who sez you have to play videogames in an arcade or the comfort of your own living room? With the video phenomenon sweeping the nation (and probably the universe), there's a whole variety of places you can whomp those little video suckers—on the job, on a boat, *in a tree!!* Where are your favorite places to test your video skills? VIDIOT is interested in seeing them. Send us your photos (to VIDIOT "Places" P.O. Box P-1064, Birmingham, MI 48012), and we'll publish the most unique ones, plus send you a check for $25 to boot!! Can't beat that deal!!!!

If videogames alone don't give you a rise, why not try playing in an elevator? It'll take you to the top of video players (ha, ha, ha)!

Larry Kaplan

Larry Kaplan

Since it's a little difficult to play games outdoors, this health freak still likes to get as close to nature as possible, if you catch our drift!

MISSILE COMMAND
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CHERIE CURRIE IS A VID-KID!

Cherie's always been into "trash" culture, realizing that one person's "trash" is another person's "art." After fronting the raunchy all-girl Runaways for several years, Cherie made waves in such motion picture gems as *Foxes* and the ever-tasteful *Parasite!* So is it any wonder that Cherie's a Vid-Kid? Play on, sweetheart!

photo by Michael N. Marks

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THE MAGAZINE OF VIDEO
VIDI

WHAT KIND OF HUMAN WRITES VIDIOT™?

Here is one of our editors hard at work doing research for our next issue. Watch for his tips in the next issue of VIDIOT.

photo by Omar Newman.